

Travels in Two Democracies

Books by Edmund Wilson

AXEL'S CASTLE

THE AMERICAN JITTERS

I THOUGHT OF DAISY

POETS, FAREWELL!

TRAVELS IN TWO DEMOCRACIES

Travels in
Two Democracies

EDMUND WILSON

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first edition

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PROLOGUE

The Man in the Mirror

Almost anywhere in the world.

A hotel restaurant: a traveler comes in and sits down.

THE TRAVELER (*to himself*). This question forever unanswered, this issue forever unsettled! It thickens in the air between man and man till we can no longer see one another: it blurs the eye of the man at his work; it comes even between man and woman. We may drink together, but the wine does not merge us; we may talk, but the talk does not direct us. We may swim in the little river, with white goats on the green of the bank; but when we stand in the open meadow, we find that the man in the soft hat is there. The man in the soft hat whom we think we have seen before. Outside the room where we are trying to make love, he is walking back and forth past the window. And wherever we go, he is there—standing aside and pretending not to watch. He numbs the imagination; he stops thought in its flight from mind to mind; he keeps the traveler from the freedom of the world. While we wait for the settlement and the answer.—But an unknown person approaches: he must not suspect this soliloquy.

THE WAITER (*handing him the menu*). Yes, sir?

THE TRAVELER (*studying the card*). Give me some—let me see—

THE WAITER. Excuse me, sir, but didn't I see you today outside the opera?

THE TRAVELER. You may have. I was there—buying a ticket. (*To himself*) I wonder whether he knows that those headquarters are just around the corner.

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THE WAITER. Wonderful performance of "Bulbul" they're giving.

THE TRAVELER. I haven't seen it. (*To himself*) Has "Bulbul" political implications?

THE WAITER. Ah, you ought to hear Gazouli, sir!

THE TRAVELER. Really? (*To himself*) Now what have I heard about Gazouli? (*To the Waiter*) Bring me some—let me see— (*To himself*) I should stick close to the cuisine of the country. (*To the Waiter*) Bring me some jellied gulls' lungs. (*To himself*) That's a dish I detest, but never mind.

THE WAITER. What else, sir?

THE TRAVELER. Nothing else. (*To himself*) This damned hotel makes me uncomfortable: I think I'll go somewhere else.

THE WAITER. Very good, sir. Jellied gulls' lungs. (*He goes.*)

A Man and Woman come over and sit down at the same table with the traveler.

THE MAN (*speaking in a language which he guesses the Traveler understands*). May we sit down here?

THE TRAVELER. Certainly. (*To himself*) Now why do they have to sit here? Didn't they see that vacant table in the corner?

THE MAN (*to the Woman in a different language*). What did you do with that letter from D.?

THE WOMAN. I gave it back to you.

THE TRAVELER (*to himself*). They're speaking the Blankville dialect. They evidently assume I don't understand it—or are they trying to find out whether I do?

THE MAN. I haven't got it in my pocket now.

THE WOMAN. I gave it back to you after I read it.

THE MAN. I've looked for it everywhere. You don't think it could have been stolen on the boat?

THE WOMAN. There was nobody who seemed suspicious.

The Man in the Mirror

THE MAN. I don't know: what about that captain who insisted on giving us champagne and asked us so many questions?

THE WOMAN. I imagine he just wanted company and thought you were somebody interesting. You may be right about him though. He seemed to have connections in both countries. We ought to go by the other line, after this.

THE MAN (*after a moment's silence, in a low and vehement voice*). The captain didn't take that letter!

THE WOMAN. Don't you think so?

THE MAN. I don't think so, and you don't think so!

THE WOMAN. I don't know—

THE MAN. You *do* know: you never gave me back that letter!

THE WOMAN. I did: I remember distinctly—

THE MAN. And you never gave me back the files of "Justice"!

THE WOMAN. I sent them to D.

THE MAN. He never received them. Well: now it comes to a showdown! I've been trying not to believe it was true. But now I've got to face it: you're a spy!

THE WOMAN. Good heavens! don't say things like that. It's your nerves. You must get away and rest.

THE MAN. I've always felt that your interest in our cause wasn't real! And you'd been a spy from the very beginning. That's the reason you would never tell me what you did before I knew you. I've been married seven years to a spy!

THE WOMAN. What I did before I knew you, if you want to know, was work in an amusement park. I was a three-legged woman with a rubber leg. I was always ashamed to tell you.

THE MAN (*sneering*). It was your apprenticeship to imposture, I suppose. If you were as clever as you are now, you must have been a great success!

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THE WOMAN. Don't: you're all unstrung!—And be careful: how do you know that that man across the table doesn't understand what we're saying?

THE MAN (*laughing with bitter sarcasm*). What difference does it make now if *he* understands what I've been saying when *you've* known everything we've been doing for the last seven years! Besides, he understands nothing. One can see at a glance that he's the kind of man who understands no language but his own.

THE WOMAN (*becoming grim*). You know what I think? I think that you're trying to provoke me. I've seen you do it with other people. You want me to get angry and say things that you can think are disloyal to the cause. You're losing all sense of reality. You've gotten so you actually *want* to have it that everybody is on the other side!

The Waiter comes up with the Traveler's order and hands the Man and Woman menus.

THE TRAVELER (*to himself while they order*). Suppose the whole thing was staged in order to provoke *me*! Strange that they should talk Blankville when I happen to know it, though by their accents I should say they were probably not Blankvillers. If I don't turn them in to the police, they'll conclude I'm a sympathizer and arrest me.

The Waiter bends over and picks up a piece of paper.

THE WAITER. Is this yours, sir?

THE MAN. Yes: thank you.

The Waiter goes.

THE WOMAN. D.'s letter?

THE MAN. Yes. (*With a significant look*) The waiter!

THE WOMAN. But why did he give it back?

THE MAN. Why not? So as not to arouse our suspicions. All they want is to know what's in it.

The Man in the Mirror

THE WOMAN. He did seem a little unauthentic. Yes: I believe you're right. He has that piercing and fatuous look in his eye that all the detectives have.

THE MAN. All he needs is the soft hat.

THE WOMAN. I believe I've seen him somewhere before.

THE MAN. And that man across the table, who is he?

THE TRAVELER (*to himself*). Dear me, it's getting very difficult to look as if I didn't understand. Did they see that I felt self-conscious when I ate that olive just now. It's too late in the meal to eat an olive.

THE WOMAN. Oh, a harmless tourist, I've concluded. I think you were right in the first place.

THE MAN. I'm not sure. He's too crass-looking to be a tourist and he has one of those deceptively expressionless faces.

THE TRAVELER. Oh, waiter!—I want the check, please.

SECOND WAITER. Your waiter will be back in a moment, sir.

THE TRAVELER (*to himself*). They're so firm and short with the guests that it's as if they weren't regular waiters, but knew that they had people in their power!

THE MAN (*who has been brooding, to the Woman*). The waiter might have taken the letter and you might still be a spy.

THE WOMAN. I'll tell you something that you may just as well know. You're under suspicion yourself—you're beginning to be watched by our own people. You're carrying things to such lengths that they think it can't be genuine. They think you're working for the authorities and overdoing it.

THE MAN. And you think so, too, do you?

THE WOMAN. No, but—

THE MAN. Who thinks so? D.? Did that come from D.? I can tell you who's the real stool—I've thought so for more than a year. He wants to get me out so that he can sabotage the whole organization! It's been D. from the very beginning. Every policy that he's proposed has been suicidal. He sold us

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out to the Yellows. He was wrong about the split with the Greens. He—

THE WOMAN. You're insane! If any man in the world was ever loyal and straightforward and sincere—

THE MAN. And you love him?—

The Waiter comes up and the Traveler pays his bill.

THE TRAVELER (*to himself*). Now to get through the ordeal of the finger-bowl. I hope my movements don't seem constrained.

THE WAITER (*to himself*). With that letter they tried to frame me!

The Traveler leaves the table and makes his way to the corridor, putting on his hat and coat.

THE TRAVELER (*desperately, to himself*). Stay at home! Stay alone! See nobody! Wait till you know who's who and where you are. Be glad you can trust *yourself*!—(*As he sees a figure approaching down the hall*) By Jove, there he is again—the man with the soft hat! The man with the soft hat whom you think you have seen before.—Now to get past him without showing him you're aware of him.

He walks into his reflection in the mirror.

U. S. A.

NOVEMBER, 1932—MAY, 1934

I. Election Night

AS soon as you go into the little restaurant, you hear a loud distinct voice making what seems to be a speech. It is a middle-aged man, all alone in the room, sitting on one side of a long table.

“Swine! scavengers!” he declares. “Walker or O’Brien—O’Brien or Walker! Turn the bums out—put more bums in! Who cares? It’s just too bad! The woman ahead of me in the polling-booth wanted to write McKee’s name in on the ballot and the cop tried to interfere—told her to get out, she’d been in the booth long enough. And then he tried to do the same thing to me! They’re scavengers!—swine!”

His skin is absolutely sallow, unflushed by any animal warmth; his face, with that salient English nose which marks a positive mind, shows a certain cultivation and dignity; but his eyes are blind and dead, as if the spirit had departed from behind them. Hunched down in his chair, his chin on his chest, he talks straight ahead at the wall, as diners and drinkers come and go, pick up the cues of his rhetorical questions and feed him for a while, then get bored and withdraw their attention. As he talks, he repeatedly strikes his forehead with the palm of a stiffened hand, whose fingers stick out and bend back like the prongs of an expiring starfish.

“Hoover or Roosevelt—who cares? There’s no difference, is there? Of course not! I’ve just spent six years in the Argentine and I come back and this is what I find! We’re at the mercy of these scavengers, aren’t we? Of course we are! And what are we going to do about it? Elect Roosevelt! Re-elect Hoover!

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The only good thing Andy Mellon ever did was make Old Overholt Whiskey! Turn the bums out—put more bums in! It's just too bad!"

He gets off on the subject of religion, as to which he makes it plain that he is able to do his own thinking. He prefers to go to the Scriptures himself—doesn't need the Church to tell him what they mean.

"You say you've just been in the Argentine?"

"*Si, signor!*" he replies to prove it.

"How are things down there?"

"Terrible! The first day I arrived in Rio Janeiro, the papers were all full of those two scavengers Sacco and Vanzetti. They were all over the front page and everybody was asking me about it. I told them that people in the States didn't pay any attention to it—at home it would have had just a couple of sticks somewhere on an inside page. The street-car motormen went on strike on account of Sacco and Vanzetti, and if you wanted to get any place, you had to walk!"

"You think Sacco and Vanzetti were guilty, do you?"

"Of course they were guilty!—they were Sicilians—fiends! And these scavengers kept them six years before they executed them! They had all the evidence in the world!—they found the cap that one of them wore! They were Sicilians—scavengers—swine!"

From time to time he reverts bitterly to the fact that he has been abandoned by the lady who came there with him. "In the kitchen!" he announces. "Always in the kitchen! Give 'em a kitchen and they're perfectly happy! And that's the right place for 'em—that's where they belong! Give 'em a kitchen and they're happy!"

But as a matter of fact the girl-friend isn't in the kitchen at all. She has merely gone into a little back room, where she

Hull-House in 1932

and another woman are swigging down brandy and soda, absorbed by their own conversation.

II. Hull-House in 1932

THE landscape turns gray: the snow-fields gray like newspaper, the sky gray like pasteboard—then darkness; just a crack of gray, distinct as a break in an old boiler, that separates darkening clouds—a stern black fortress with one smokestack: the Northern Indiana Public Utility Company—darkness with light at long intervals—a sudden street with lighted stores and street cars—then darkness again: the dim front of a frame house, dim signboards—a red electric globe on a barber's pole—bridges in the blackness, a shore?—black factories—long streets with rows of lights that stretch away into darkness—a large blunt tower embroidered in coarse beadwork of red, green and gold lights—then the endless succession of cars speeding along the dark lake front with the lights at shorter intervals now—then a thing like a red-hot electric toaster as big as an office building, which turns out to be one of the features of next summer's World Fair.

But mostly black midland darkness. Chicago is one of the darkest of great cities. In the morning the winter sun does not seem to give any light: it leaves the streets dull. It is more like a forge which has just been started up, is just beginning to burn red in an atmosphere darkened by coal-fumes. All the world seems made of gray fog—gray fog and white smoke—the great square white and gray buildings seem to have been pressed out of the saturated atmosphere. The smooth asphalt road along the lake-side seems solidified polished smoke. The lake, in the early morning, is of a strange stagnant substance

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like pearl just becoming faintly luminous and liquid, opaque like everything else in the city but more sensitive than asphalt or stone. The Merchandise Mart—the *biggest* building in the world, as the Empire State Building is the *highest*—is no tower, in the fog, but a mountain, to brood upon whose cubic content is to be astounded, desolated, stunned. The Chicago River, dull green, itself a work of engineering, runs backward along its original course, buckled with black iron bridges, which uncloseth, one after the other, each in two short fragments, as a tug drags car-barges under them, like the peristaltic movement of the stomach pushing a stiff piece of food along. The sun half-reveals these scenes for a time, but its energies are brief. Afternoon has scarcely established itself as an identifiable phenomenon when light succumbs to dullness and the day lapses back into dark. The buildings seem mounds of soft darkness caked and carved out of swamp-mud and rubber-stamped here and there with red neon signs. A good many of the streets, aside from the main thoroughfares, are dimly lighted or not at all; and even those that are adequately lighted, lose themselves in blurred coal-smoke vistas.

In that dull air, among those long, low, straight streets—the deadened civilization of industry where people are kept just enough alive to see that the machinery is running—the almost neutral red brick walls of Hull-House have themselves an industrial plainness. The old, big, square, high-windowed mansion of early family grandeur, embedded in the dormitories, eating halls, gymnasiums, nurseries and laundries that today pack a city block, has been chastened as well as expanded: it has something of both the monastery and the factory. The high Victorian rooms that open into one another through enormous arched and corniced doorways, though they have old mahogany sofas and tables and faded Turkish rugs, are

Hull-House in 1932

scantly and serviceably furnished. The white woodwork and even the marble fireplace have been painted a sort of neutral drab green so that the use of the house may not soil them. In the little polygon room, where one imagines hanging pots of ferns and a comfortable window-seat, are a typewriter and a set of colored charts showing the shift of nationalities around Hull-House.

Yet there are a fragment of a Greek frieze and copies of Italian pictures and statues: the pre-Raphaelite cult of art. Behind the glass doors of bookcases are old sets of Ruskin and Augustus Hare's "Walks in Rome"; and the hallway is lined with photographs of residents and friends of the house. On the walls of the polygon room hang the patron saints and heroes: Kropotkin and Catherine Breshkovsky, Arnold Toynbee and Jacob Riis—and Jane Addams's father; and over the desk by the front door is Jane Addams herself, slender and winning, in the big-sleeved high-collared costume of the nineties, almost like an illustration for some serial by Mrs. Burton Harrison or Howells in the old *Century Magazine*.

A little girl with curvature of the spine, whose mother had died when she was a baby, she abjectly admired her father, a man of consequence in frontier Illinois, a friend of Lincoln and a member of the state legislature, who had a flour mill and a lumber mill on his place. Whenever there were strangers at Sunday school, she would try to walk out with her uncle so that her father should not be disgraced by people's knowing that such a fine man had a daughter with a crooked spine. When he took her one day to a mill which was surrounded by horrid little houses and explained to her, in answer to her questions, that the reason people lived in such horrid houses was that they couldn't afford anything better, she declared that when she grew

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up she should herself continue to live in a big house, but that it should stand among the houses of poor people.

At college in the late seventies, she belonged to a group of girls who vowed before they parted for vacation that each would have read the whole of Gibbon before they met again in the fall. In a Greek oration she delivered, Bellerophon figured as the Idealism which alone could slay the Chimera of Social Evils; and for her graduation essay she chose Cassandra, doomed "always to be in the right and always disbelieved and rejected." She heard rumors of the doctrines of Darwin and borrowed scientific books from a brother-in-law who had studied medicine in Germany; and she resisted with invincible stubbornness the pressure brought to bear by her teachers to make her go into the missionary field. The year she graduated from college, she inherited part of her father's estate and gave the college a thousand dollars to spend on a scientific library.

She herself went to medical school; but her spinal trouble got worse and she had to stop. She spent six months strapped to a bed. This gave her lots of time for reading, with no necessity for feeling that she ought to be doing anything else, and she was very glad to have it; but when she was able to get about again, she felt dreadfully exhausted and depressed. She tried Europe; but one day when she was in London, she went out for a bus-ride in the East End. As she looked down on the misery and squalor, she remembered De Quincey's "Vision of Sudden Death": how, when confronted with a pair of lovers about to be run over by the mail-coach in which he was traveling, he had found himself powerless to warn them till he had remembered the exact lines in the "Iliad" which describe the shout of Achilles; and she was suddenly filled with disgust for the artificial middle-class culture upon which she had been trying to nourish herself and which had equipped her to meet this horror with nothing but a wretched literary allu-

Hull-House in 1932

sion, itself recalling another culture-addict as far outside life as she.

What was the good of enjoying German operas and the pictures in Italian galleries? Between two trips to Europe, she visited a Western farm on which she held a mortgage—it was one of the investments which made her traveling possible. She found a woman and her children starved by the drought and trying to raise money on a promissory note for which they were offering a penful of pigs as collateral. The pigs were starved, too, and horrible: they were eating one of their own number, all crowded together and hunched up.

She gave the mortgages up and went back to Europe again. There she saw striking match girls with phosphy jaw. She decided to return to Chicago and to found a settlement-house—there had never yet been one in America. The “subjective necessity” for settlement work she analyzed as follows: “first, the desire to interpret democracy in social terms; secondly, the impulse beating at the very source of our lives, urging us to aid in the race progress; and, thirdly, the Christian movement toward humanitarianism.” But she did not exclude “the desire for a new form of social success due to the nicety of imagination, which refuses worldly pleasures unmixed with the joys of self-sacrifice” and “a love of approbation so vast that it is not content with the treble clapping of delicate hands, but wishes also to hear the bass notes from toughened palms.” Her father had impressed upon her, as a girl, that mental integrity, the unwillingness to make pretenses which one knew inside one did not live up to, was practically the whole of morality.

In South Halsted Street, where there were Italians, Germans, Russians and Jews, she tried to help relieve their difficulties: to teach the emigrants English and to give the young generation some idea of the European tradition from which they had been cut off. But this led to looking into their living

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conditions; and the problems of their living conditions led to the industrial system. When it was a question of children of four spending their whole day indoors pulling out basting threads or pasting labels on boxes, she found herself under the obligation of trying to engineer labor legislation—and of disapproving of competition in business. One of the residents at Hull-House was appointed factory inspector.

At the time of the Pullman strike in 1894, she was appalled to see Chicago split up into two fiercely antagonistic camps. She had known Mr. Pullman personally and had been impressed by his benevolent intentions in building a model town for his employees: Hull-House tried to maintain relations with both sides; but by the time the strike was over, she found out that she and Mr. Pullman were on different sides of the fence, and that he was highly indignant with her.

The Socialists and other radicals tried to convince her that she ought to be one of them; but though she carefully looked up socialism, she resisted them as she had resisted the teachers who had tried to talk her into missionary work at college. She could not bind herself to parties and principles: what she did had to be done independently on a basis of day-by-day experience. And she had still sufficiently vivid an impression of the classless democracy of the Western frontier so that it was difficult for her to imagine a general class conflict in America.

Yet the winter after the World's Fair Chicago was full of people left stranded with no work; and she was assailed by a new sense of shame at being comfortable in the midst of misery. The activities of Hull-House began to seem to her futile; its philanthropy merely a specious way of reconciling one's conscience to the social injustice from which one profited. She remembered that the effect on Tolstoy of a similar period of suffering in Moscow had been to make him degrade his own standard of living to that of the poor themselves. She was in-

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capacitated by another serious illness; but got well and decided to go to Russia and discuss the problem with Tolstoy himself.

She found him working in the hayfields with the peasants and eating their black bread and porridge, while the Countess with her children and their governess had a regular upper-class dinner. He pulled out one of Miss Addams's big sleeves and said that there was enough material in it to make a frock for a little girl; and he asked whether she did not find "such a dress" a "barrier to the people." She tried to explain that, since big sleeves were the fashion, the working girls in Chicago were wearing even bigger ones than hers, and that you couldn't dress like a peasant on South Halsted Street as the peasants there wore middle-class clothes. But she was abashed when he asked her who "fed" her and how she got her "shelter," and she had to tell him that her money came from a farm a hundred miles out of Chicago. "So you are an absentee landlord?" he said scathingly. "Do you think you will help the people more by adding yourself to the crowded city than you would by tilling your own soil?"

She went away feeling humbled, and before she could allow herself to enjoy Wagner's "Ring" at Bayreuth, she resolved that when she got back to Hull-House, she would spend two hours every day in the bakery. Yet when she was actually at home again and found the piles of correspondence and the people waiting to see her, she decided that this and not baking was her work, and forgot her Tolstoyan scruples.

Her efforts for labor legislation embittered the manufacturers against her; her attempts to get garbage and dead animals in the neighborhood of South Halsted Street removed embroiled her with the political machine: garbage-collecting was a racket, and the rackets seemed to go right on up. She was astonished to find that opposition to re-election of a corrupt alderman roused both pulpit and press against her. When

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Czolgosz assassinated McKinley, the editor of an anarchist paper was arrested and held incommunicado, not allowed to see even a lawyer. She protested and found that Hull-House was denounced as a hotbed of anarchy. When the agents of the Tsar succeeded in making Gorky a pariah in America by circulating the rumor that he and his wife were not married, she asked a Chicago paper to print an article in his defense and found that she was accused of immorality by interests that wanted to get her off the school board.

At last when in 1900 she went to see the Passion Play at Oberammergau, it struck her for the first time that the real enemy of Jesus was the money power. The young agitator had antagonized the merchants by interfering with their trade in the temple, and hence the Pharisees, whose racket depended on the temple, too. Church and State had stood solid with them; and the money power had bribed Judas to betray him.

When she advocated peace during the War, she found that President Wilson bowed her out and that she was presently being trailed by detectives. And then, when the War was over, people were more intolerant than ever.

Hull-House had always stood for tolerance: all the parties and the faiths had found asylum there and lived pretty harmoniously together. And it still stands planted with proud irrelevance in the midst of those long dark streets, where its residents sometimes get beaten and robbed, only a few blocks from a corner made famous by a succession of gang murders. With its solid walls, its enclosed stair-cased courts, its independent power plant, it stands like a medieval chateau protected by its moat and portcullis.

Inside it there is peace and a sort of sanctity. Jane Addams at seventy-two still dominates her big house among the little ones—though she is supposed to have been forbidden by the doctors to spend more than four hours there a day—with her

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singular combination of the authority of a great lady and the humility of a saint. In the large refectorylike dining-room with its copper and brass and bare brick, the quick glances of the "seeing eye" which fascinated young women in the nineties and excited them to go in for settlement work—that glance at once penetrating and shy—still lights its responses around her table. Through her vitality, Hull-House still lives: the expression both of pride and humility: the pride of the imagination and moral sense for which the little worlds of social groupings—and of intellectual groupings as well—are too small; the humility of one who, seeing so far, sees beyond herself, too, and feels herself lost amid the same uncertainties, thwarted by the same cross-purposes, as the rest.

Around the social workers of Hull-House today there stretches a sea of misery more appalling even than that which discouraged Miss Addams in the nineties. This winter even those families who had managed to hang on by their savings and earnings have been forced to apply for relief.

A relief-worker's cross-section of an industrial suburb shows the sinking level of the standard of living. The people are mostly Poles. Every pressure has been brought to bear on them to make them spend their money on motor-cars, radios, overstuffed furniture and other luxuries. And they are caught now between two worlds with no way of living comfortably in either, with little prospect of living at all.

In one house, a girl of seventeen interprets for her mother, in whom the girl's stocky figure has expanded to enormous amorphous bulk, and changes not only her language but her expression and gestures, her personality, passing from English to Polish. She had till lately been doing all the housework for a real-estate man for \$2 a week; but she decided he was im-

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posing on her and quit. She is handsome, and evidently high-spirited—Americanized during the whoopee period. Her brother had had a job on the conveyor at a book-bindery; but they have managed by a mechanical improvement to eliminate his job, so that he has been laid off with no prospect of re-employment. The girl takes you up from the downstairs kitchen, where the family mostly lives, and shows you the little-used upstairs, papered with big blue, pink and magenta blossoms and furnished with all the things that the salesmen of the boom have sold them: a victrola; wadded chairs and couches, spotted with a pattern of oranges, which nobody seems ever to have sat in. On the walls, as in all these houses, in ornate gold frames, are Slavic saints and madonnas, bristling with Polish characters and Byzantine embroidery and wearing spiky gold crowns.

Elsewhere an old man is dying of a tumor, with no heat in the house, on a cold day. His pale bones of arms lie crooked like bent pins as he gasps; nothing is heard in the house but his breath. The grandmother, her sharp Polish nose sticking out from under a bonnetlike cap, stands herself silent as a ghost. They are both very old. Their young married granddaughter, in well-fitting American street-clothes, an American middle-class woman, but today as badly off as they are, has just been to the relief station for coal.

In another place, a family of five have only three small rooms in a basement and they have sunk below any standard: the father already grinningly, glaringly drunk in the middle of the morning, the mother stupid or discouraged with her struggle against poverty and filth. They live around the stove with their small dirty children in the close, sweetish, sickish smell of boiling clothes and cooking. Where they sleep on two narrow cots, the bedclothes are old twisted gray rags that have not even been smoothed out flat. They don't know much English; they can't explain what they have done about insurance and

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relief; they don't understand, themselves. All they know is that they have that dirty hole from which they have not yet been expelled and where the man, with a little liquor in him, can imagine himself the shrewd substantial father of a family, with the situation well under control. In another basement, however, the young husband has carpentered and painted the big cellar room which with a tiny bedroom is all they have, so that it looks almost like a human dwelling. He used to work for the Fruit-growers' Express, but has been laid off a long time. The stout blond girl he is married to, who has to be on her feet all day, has just had a collapse due to her heart. They have no children but keep a canary in a cage. And another young wife has put kewpie dolls around in an otherwise bare apartment and has made blue curtains for the cot where her two young children sleep. She and her husband are very fond of one another and very fond of the children. They are the kind of people that hate to ask for relief and they have put it off as long as they could, with the result that, though good-looking and young, they are now thin and pale with undernourishment.

A pink, clear-eyed, innocent-eyed woman, alone in an immaculately kept kitchen all white oilcloth and green and white linoleum and with the latest thing in big gleaming gas-ranges, flushes at the relief-worker's questions. She is going to have a baby and has applied for money to pay the midwife. The relief-worker offers her a doctor but she is used to having the midwife. An elderly couple from Zurich live in an apartment equally immaculate though far less completely equipped, amid blue and green chromolithographs of Swiss waterfalls and mountains and lakes. The woman is cooking a few slivers of onions on a tiny coal-stove, which was intended primarily for heat. The husband is out picking up coal on the railroad tracks in order to keep it going. The woman suddenly begins to cry as she is answering the relief-worker's questions, then as suddenly stops.

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The husband, a little smiling man with Kaiser Wilhelm mustaches, comes back with a few pieces of coal: the railroad detectives chased him away. He was formerly an industrial chemist and has recently turned his ingenuity to inventing little gambling toys. One of them he has a fair prospect of selling: you shoot a marble which drops into a hole and knocks up a little tin flap: "Swiss Navy" counts lowest and "America" a hundred percent. In another place, the man who lost his job on the book-binding conveyor has a fellow in the artistic field—a young violinist whose profession has been abolished by the talkies.

Above the straight criss-cross streets of small dwellings, houses of dull brick and old gray boards, and newer little two-story Noah's Arks, prick the sharp Roman Catholic spire and the bulbs of the Greek Orthodox Church.

The single men go to flophouses. During the last year (September 30, 1931—September 30, 1932), 50,000 have registered at the Clearing House. Those who are not residents of Chicago are ordered to leave the city: if they got there by paying their fare, they are given a half-fare which will take them home. Others are sent to the asylum, the poorhouse, the veterans' home; referred to the blind pension, the juvenile court. About 500 men a month are disposed of in this way. The Oak Forest poorhouse, called "the Graveyard," has people sleeping in the corridors and turned 19,000 away last year. The rest are sent to the shelters, where they get two meals a day and a bed.

Among the high whitewashed walls of an old furniture factory, the soiled yellow plaster and the scrawled and punctured blackboards of an old public school, the scraped-out offices and pompous paneling of a ghastly old courthouse; on the floors befouled with spit, in the peppery-sweetish stink of cooking food, sulphur fumigations, bug exterminators, rank urinals em-

Hull-House in 1932

balmed with creosote—elements figuring more or less prominently as one goes from room to room, floor to floor, but all fused in the stagnant smell of humanity; they eat their chicken-feed and slum amid the deafening clanking of trays and dump the slops in g. i. cans; wait for prizefights or movies of Thurston or Tarzan (provided to keep them out of the hands of the Communists or from holding meetings themselves) in “recreation halls” with “Hoover’s Hotel” chalked on the wall—big bare rooms suffocating with smoke, strewn like vacant lots with newspapers, smeared like the pavements with phlegm: here they fill the lecture seats, squat on the steps of the platform, stretch out on old papers on the floor. In one place, a great wall-legend reminds them: “The Blood of God Can Make the Vilest Clean,” and they get routed to mess through a prayer-meeting so that they may be exposed to religion on the way: when they come back to the recreation hall, they discover that a cheerful waltz has served merely as bait to an harangue by an old Cicero policeman who has been saved. They send their clothes to be fumigated and, if they are wet with the winter rain, ruined. They herd into steaming showers, the young still building some flesh on straight frames, the old with flat chests, skinny arms and round sagging bellies; and they flop at last on the army cots or in the bunks in double tiers, where the windows shut against the piercing cold keep in the sour smell—men in holey socks and slit union-suits, men tattooed with fancy pictures or the emblems of some service they have left—resting bunioned feet taken out of flattened shoes or flat arches wound around with adhesive tape—lying with newspapers for pillows, their arms behind their heads or with a sheet pulled over their faces or wrapped up in blankets, rigid on their backs, their skins stretched tight over their jawbones so that they look like the jaws of the dead.

There is a clinic which does what it can to head off the

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syphilis and clap. There is also a great deal of t. b., to which the Negroes seem to have a fatal susceptibility; and in one shelter, spinal meningitis got out of hand for a while and broke nine backs on its rack. Another common complaint of the flophouses is poisoning due to drinking a dilution of wood alcohol which the inmates buy for fifteen cents a pint, which looks and tastes, as somebody says; like a mixture of benzine, kerosene and milk, and which usually lands them in the infirmary or the psychopathic ward. One man, however, given his choice between his bottle and admission to the shelter, refused to give up the bottle: he preferred to spend the night in the cold rather than surrender his only support in a life so aimless and hopeless. In the Salvation Army shelter they will not take in drinkers, but the others do the best they can with them. In one shelter there is a cripple who comes in drunk every night. "I wouldn't be surprised," says the manager, "if a hearse drove up and a dead man got up and walked out and asked for a flop." One man turned up "lousy as a pet coon—so lousy nobody would go nearum and they put-um in the stable with the horse for the night and the horse tried to get away. The next morning they gave-um a shower and scrubbedum with a long-handled brush." But most of the cases in the infirmaries—from exhaustion to bad kidneys and body sores—come down to the same basic disease: starvation.

Razor-slashings and shootings bring in other patients—though the prospect of a day of work a week with its brief liberation from the shelters is said to have diminished these. The bad characters are sent to the bull-pens in the basement, where at close quarters, in fetid air, they sleep on hard benches with their coats under their heads. Newcomers for whom there is no room above are dumped down to join them.

Yet Chicago has been apparently rather conspicuously efficient

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in providing and running these shelters. At best, it is like the life of barracks—but with none of the common work and purpose which gives a certain amount of stimulus to even a dull campaign. In the shelters there is nothing to co-operate on and nothing to look forward to, no developments, no chance for distinction. The old man is ending his life without a home and with no hope of one; the wage-earner who has hitherto been respectable finds himself dropped down among casuals and gradually acquires their attitude; the young man who comes to maturity during the workless period of the depression never learns the habit of work. (There are few actual hoboes here: the hobo can do better stealing or begging.)

In so far as men are unable to adapt themselves, they must live under a continual oppression of fear or guilt or despair. One sees among them faces that are shocking in their contrast to their environment: men who look as if they had never had a day's ill health or done a day's careless work in their lives. Now they jump at the opportunity given them to spend a day a week clearing the rubbish off vacant lots or cleaning the streets underneath the Loop tracks. This is the only thing that stands between them and the complete loss of independence which brings with it the loss of personality and degrades them to the primal, dismal, undifferentiated city grayness, depriving them even of the glow of life which sets them off from the pavements and the sodden old newspapers and the fog, rubbing them down to nothing, forcing them out of life.

None of these single-men's shelters, however, produces such an impression of horror as the Angelus Building on South Wabash Avenue, where families of homeless Negroes have taken refuge. This neighborhood was once fairly well-to-do; but today, left behind by the city's growth in other directions, it

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presents a desolation worse than that of the slums. When the snow in the darkening afternoon seems as dingy as the dusk and the sky as cold and tangible as the snow—as if the neutral general medium of the city had condensed in such a way as to make it harder to move and exist in—the houses, scattered interminably along the straight miles of the street, monotonous without being uniform, awkward or cheap attempts at various types of dignified architecture in gray limestone, colorless boards or red brick, whether they are inhabited or not, all seem abandoned now. The windowless slots of one open into a hollow shell: it has been gutted of even its partitions; the clumsy romanesque prongs of another make it look like a blackened pulled tooth; another displays, stuck onto its façade some distance above the ground, a pretentious brownstone doorway from under which the front steps have been knocked like a lower jaw. As a climax to all this, the Angelus Building looms blackly on the corner of its block, seven stories, thick with dark windows, caged in a dingy mesh of fire-escapes like mattress-springs on a junk-heap, hunched up, hunchback-proportioned, jam-crammed in its dumbness and darkness with miserable wriggling life.

It was built in 1892 and was once the Ozark Hotel, popular during the World's Fair. In the dim little entrance hall, the smudged and roughened mosaic, the plaster pattern of molding, the fancy black grill of the elevator, most of it broken off, do not recall any former splendor—they are abject, mere chips and shreds of the finery of the dead, trodden down into the waste where they have been left. In its hundred cells there is darkness: the tenants can't pay for the light; and cold: the heating system doesn't work. It is an old fire-trap which has burned several times—killing a number of people the last time; and now, as it is good for nothing else, it has been turned over

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by its owner to the Negroes, who flock into the tight-packed apartments and get along as best they can on such money as they can collect from the Charities.

There are former domestic servants and porters, former mill-hands and stockyard workers; there are whores and hoodlums living next door to respectable former laundresses and Baptist preachers; one veteran of the World War and former foreman of the Sunkist Pie Company now lives in cold and darkness with his widowed mother, even the furniture which he had been buying for \$285 the outfit and on which he had paid all but the last installment of \$50.20, taken away by the furniture company. They burn kerosene lamps and warm themselves by charcoal buckets and coal-stoves. The water-closets won't flush and the water stands in the bathtubs.

The children play in the dark halls or along the narrow iron galleries of an abysmal central shaft, which, lighted faintly through glass at the top, is foggy and stifling with coal-smoke like a nightmare of jail or Hell. In the silence of this shaft ominous bangs and breakages occur—then all is deathly still again. The two top floors have been stripped by fire and by the tenants' tearing things out to burn or sell them: apartments have lost their doors and bathroom plumbing lies uncovered. These two floors have been condemned and are deserted. Relief workers who have visited the Angelus Building have come away so overwhelmed with horror that they have made efforts to have the whole place condemned—to the piteous distress of the occupants who consider it an all-right-enough place when you've got nowhere else to go. And where to send these sixty-seven black families? Brought to America in the holds of slave-ships and afterwards released from their slavery with the chance of improving their lot, they are now being forced back into the black cavern of the Angelus Building where differ-

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ing standards of living, sometimes won by the work of generations, are all being reduced to zero.

Those who want to keep clear of the jail-like shelters get along as they can in the streets and huddle at night under the Loop or build shacks on empty lots. On whatever waste-places they are permitted to live, the scabby-looking barnacles appear, knocked together from old tar-paper and tin, old car-bodies, old packing boxes, with old stovepipes leaning askew, amid the blackened weeds in the snow and the bones of old rubbish-piles. One "Hooverville" on Harrison Street flies a tattered black rag like the flag of despair.

The inhabitants of the Hoovervilles forage from the city dumps, as do many of those whom charity will not help or who for one reason or another will not go to it or for whom the relief they get is inadequate.

There is not a garbage-dump in Chicago which is not diligently haunted by the hungry. Last summer in the hot weather when the smell was sickening and the flies were thick, there were a hundred people a day coming to one of the dumps, falling on the heap of refuse as soon as the truck had pulled out and digging in it with sticks and hands. They would devour all the pulp that was left on the old slices of watermelon and cantelope till the rinds were as thin as paper; and they would take away and wash and cook discarded onions, turnips and potatoes. Meat is a more difficult matter, but they salvage a good deal of that, too. The best is the butcher's meat which has been frozen and hasn't spoiled. In the case of the other meat, there are usually bad parts that have to be cut out or they scald it and sprinkle it with soda to kill the taste and the smell. Fish is likely to be impossible—though some people have made fish-head soup. Soup has also been made out of chicken-claws.

A private incinerator at Thirty-fifth and La Salle Streets

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which disposes of the garbage from restaurants and hotels, has been regularly visited by people in groups of as many as twenty at a time who pounce upon anything that looks edible before it is thrown into the furnace. The women complained to investigators that the men took an unfair advantage by jumping on the truck before it was unloaded; but a code had finally been established by which different sets of people would come at different times every day so that everybody was given a chance. Another dump at Thirty-first Street and Cicero Avenue has been the center of a Hooverville of three hundred people.

The family of a laid-off restaurant dish-washer lived on food from the dump for two years. They had to cook it on the gas of the people downstairs, as their own had been shut off. Their little girl got ptomaine poisoning. Two veterans of the World War who had been expelled with the bonus army from Washington and made their homes in the fire-boxes of an old kiln, were dependent on the dump for some time, though a buddy of theirs found he could do better by panhandling at people's doors. One widow with a child of nine who had formerly made \$18 a week in a factory and who has since been living on \$4 a week relief and two or three hours' work a day at fifty cents an hour, has tried to get along without garbage but has had to fall back on it frequently during a period of three years. Another widow who used to do housework and laundry, but who was finally left without any work, fed herself and her fourteen-year-old son on garbage. Before she picked up the meat, she would always take off her glasses so that she couldn't see the maggots; but it sometimes made the boy so sick to look at it and smell it that he couldn't bring himself to eat. He was badly undernourished and weighed only eighty-two pounds.

Many people in the Cicero Avenue Hooverville have been poisoned from eating garbage, and some of them have died. One man ate a can of condemned crab-meat which had been

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thrown away by a chain store and, when found several days later, was in a condition worse than that of the crab-meat.

On the interminable latitude of West Congress Street, lit only at long intervals on one side by livid low-power lamps, where huge cubes of buildings are belted rarely by lighted departments still at work and where black and blind ranks of trucks, all alike, stand posted in front of dark factories, some anonymous hand has chalked up on a corner: "VOTE RED. THE PEOPLE ARE GOOFY."

III. Illinois Household

A PICTURE of Lincoln, a desk, a dictionary on a stand. Outside, the countryside of central Illinois is large and flat and calm and covered with snow.

WIFE. Why, the Battle of Mulkeytown, as they call it, is going to get to be like "The Mayflower" for the miners—people being able to say they took part in it! They say there were eighteen hundred cars and trucks gathering strength all the way—the march was thirty or forty miles long. They were orderly—there wasn't any traffic trouble—they'd decided not to carry arms and they didn't expect any violence—

HUSBAND. A star reporter from Chicago rode along with 'em with a cane and a chow dog!

WIFE. They were going to Dowell where the people were friendly. They had a camp all ready for them there and the people were carrying in food for them and the city officials were going to receive them. But when they got to Duquoin, the police

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shuffled them around so that the ones who knew the way were behind—and they'd changed the signs on the road! They'd put the signs that said "To Dowell" on the road to Mulkeytown!—

HUSBAND. They had machine-guns across the road so that they couldn't go that way anyway!

WIFE. They had machine-guns across the fork of the road that went to Dowell and they told them to go on, that the other fork went to Dowell—and so they went on to where the business men were lined up waiting for them in the gullies beside the road—they say they were along the road for two miles. The business men had been drilling for weeks—regular military drill! The fire-whistles would blow, and they'd all run out of their offices and stores and go to the drill-grounds and drill. They had baseball bats and billiard cues and clubs! They smashed the headlights and the windshields, and they'd reach in and club people's arms. The people left the cars and ran to the farmhouses—and they turned the machine-guns on the fields to keep them back. They could see the machine-gun fire mowing down the corn and there was a panic.—The people in the houses just about went insane—they were afraid to go out. They just sat inside and heard it over the radio! Some of the men got shotguns and wanted to go out to fight, but they couldn't get enough courage to go up against the machine-guns.—People couldn't eat for a week, they were so sick. There was blood all over the concrete—and food all alongside of the road!—loaves of bread hanging on the fenceposts!—those crazy hoodlums had come down there and stamped on the tomatoes and things!—There was only one doctor in town who'd take care of the people who were hurt—and the gas stations wouldn't give them any gas! Some of them have never got their cars back! They wouldn't pick up the people who'd been hurt. There was a woman with a baby in her arms who'd been shot

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and they took her into the hospital—but nobody else! There was a man out all night with a broken arm.—After that, the people were boiling—

HUSBAND. That was when they organized the Progressives.

BOY (*eleven*). Progressive Miners of America!

WIFE. The U.M.W. officials had stolen the tally-sheets, you know, when the members voted against the \$5 wage scale. Then when the locals voted to strike, the Lewis men started shooting and beating up people in Franklin County. The chairman of the local union down there presides with a gun instead of a gavel—his brother's a deputy and he's deputized himself. That's where the Orient Mine is—it's supposed to be the biggest mine in the world. They've got a great huge factory—it used to employ two thousand before they got the machines. They murder people brutally down there! The people are scared to come to their doors—when anybody knocks at night they turn out the lights real quick and come to the door with a gun. Last August they called Joe Colbert aside and shot him when he was out picking mushrooms. His wife heard the shots and she thought somebody had shot a dog—then she saw some men in a car and she went out and found him dead. They say the sheriff was sitting in his car around the corner all the time.

BOY. They killed Lauranti on the picket-line!

WIFE. His body had sixteen shots in it. As a woman was picking him up, a man crazy drunk swung with a bat and broke his neck.—The gun-thugs are drunk all the time—they give them a lot of liquor.

HUSBAND. They're full of whisky and dope. The sheriff comes around screwing up his mouth and twitching his arm like this. Don't tell me! I know what's the matter with him! And there's a circuit judge that's a hophead, too.—A gun-thug'll start out with a head full of snow and think he's a

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hell of a fellow when he drives the women around with a baseball bat!

WIFE. I never thought such things could happen in Illinois!

HUSBAND. It's the pressure of the Insull receivers, I suppose. The Peabody Coal Company is one of the Insull interests, and they'd just gotten a couple of railroad contracts.

WIFE. I just came back from down there. They say they ran me out. I'm the president of the Women's Auxiliary—that includes wives of the U.M.W. members as well as Progressives. We're trying to unite the North and the South that way—

HUSBAND. They're all with us even in Franklin County—the only way they're able to enforce the U.M.W. contracts is through intimidation. The U.M.W. locals are sending the Progressives money for relief.

WIFE. We got our first auxiliary out of Franklin County—and they're all joining.—They wanted to call it the Ladies' Auxiliary—they didn't know why coal-miners' wives couldn't be ladies—but I said we ought to call ourselves women.—They told us it was no use going down—that the Law said there never would be a Progressives' meeting held in Franklin County—but we held about six meetings with the gunmen right across the street. We had meetings in people's houses with miners on guard outside and in U.M.W. halls—it's against the Lewis constitution to let anybody else speak there, you know, but they let me. I taught school five years in the next county and all my family worked in the mines and the people know me down there. And I'd come at the psychological moment—they were mad about the special assessment. I'd say to them, "They're assessing you men to shoot people up in Taylorville!—There are six hundred deputies and gun-thugs in Taylorville alone!—they've even got a thug up there who was mixed up in the Kincaid robbery—a man who killed his own brother and stuck him in the straw-stack!—and that's what they're assessing

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you men to pay for!" And I said that I'd heard that some of them from down there had gone up to Taylorville to scab. That's what I can't understand—their being so shameless about scabbing! I told them that the boys were saying that any miners that went up to Taylorville were gonta come back in boxes! They say they sent one man back with an S branded on his cheek.—At one of the meetings there was a Lewis man there and he got up and tried to oppose me—and then somebody pulled out a razor and said, "You're not going to insult a woman here!" And then the Lewis man tried to stop me on a point of order—he said I was going beyond the five-minute limit and so they took a vote on whether I was to have all the time I wanted and everybody got up except the Lewis man.—The whole thing has got the women up in arms! When the women were coming from Mt. Olive to go on the Taylorville picket-line and a bunch of young National Guardsmen met them and threw tear-gas bombs at them, those women said things men wouldn't say! There was one woman, I never heard anything like it—a mother of Boy Scouts!

But the second week we went down to West Frankfort. They told us that Lewis would never let us speak there—that's where Orient No. 2 is. But we went down anyway—we said, "Those women expect us and we're going!" We'd written to the state's attorney, and he'd promised that we could hold a meeting—he said he'd give us an escort out of the county if we had any reason to believe we were in danger. Well, when I went to go to the meeting, the street was full of people and the hall was dark. The sheriff and the gang had been after me in people's houses, but they hadn't found me—and I walked down the street in plain view with a roll of charters under my arm. But when I got to the hall, the women said, "Come here quick!—the sheriff's gonta kill you!" I said, "That's hot—the sheriff's gonta kill me!" They said, "They're walking up and down

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the street—they're drunk—you better get away!—you can't go up against the Law!" But I waited for the meeting of the trustees. The trustees of the building were having a meeting about it and they were willing to have me speak—they said: "We own the building and these women pay us for the building." But the sheriff stood over them and he raved and he threatened and he told them, "If you try to have her speak, you got no more card, you got no more job! I'll bar that door, and if she tries to speak, her life ain't worth a damn!" They used clubs to drive out the women—there were about a thousand there. One woman who was there with her daughter tried to go to a movie to meet another woman, and a deputy chased her and hit her on the back of the head and knocked her down—and the girl tried to scream and he slapped her—but she screamed, "Oh, my God! don't kill my mother!" And another gunman who wasn't quite as crazy came up and prevented him.—Then the sheriff came in and he said that I'd have to get out of town right away—and what do you think he had in his hand to identify me? He had the letter the state's attorney had written me promising to give me protection!

HUSBAND. If you go to the Peabody offices in Chicago, you can see a special kind of hickory club they've got there. They've got them right there in the office!—so a man who was in there the other day told me. And tear-gas in tanks!

WIFE. If you could only find out what it is between Lewis and the operators! There ought to be a congressional investigation!

HUSBAND. They want to hang on to their salaries and their graft—and the officials have got so much on each other they're scared to rebel against the organization.

WIFE. They say Lewis owns Insull stock.

HUSBAND. We've still got to reckon with Lewis.

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BOY. Gotta fight John L. Lewis's gun-thugs!

WIFE. He's the Mussolini type!

HUSBAND. People go to see him and come away as if they'd had a dose of hop. He never had that effect on me, but he does on lots of people. He's sort of squat and wears his hair long and talks without moving his mouth. He walks up and down the floor and pours forth a torrent of eloquence.

WIFE. The operators and Lewis and the authorities are all together against us. They've threatened to kill us if we go back down there.

BOY. While you're down in Franklin County, Ma, you're not doin' anything for Taylorville!

IV. A Great Dream Come True

THE Empire State Building was the largest building in the world. The Radio City Music Hall in New York City is the largest theater in the world. It contains 6,200 seats, has a stage 144 feet wide and 80 feet deep and cost \$7,000,000. The Music Hall and its fellow, the RKO Roxy Theatre, represented for Samuel L. Rothafel "the fulfillment of the aspirations of a lifetime, a great dream come true." He had already had a notable failure with one monster amusement palace; but, applying to the Rockefellers under the sponsorship of Mr. Owen D. Young, that large-visioned representative of the electrical interests, he was able to persuade them to allow him to try it again on an even bigger scale. One of the features of the original Roxy's had been a bust of Napoleon in the lobby.

And in less than two years' time, over 11,000 tons of steel, over 9,600 tons of brick, had been assembled into two gigantic theaters and a limestone and aluminum skyscraper which makes

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against the pale New York sky what seems a sheer shaft of packed sand.

Outside, a long aluminum-gray strip winks "Radio City" vertically in rose-red neon letters. Gray and brown mats pave the lobby, and from the ceiling shine round light-reflectors with black-blobbed bulbs in the centers, like the eyes of enormous Mickey Mice.

Inside, the Grand Foyer has a majesty which would be imperial if it were not meaningless. Against walls of henna-red, with wainscots of dried-blood-red marble, rise mirror-lengths, framed in long gray curtains and with cylindrical lustres embedded in them, to the height of the highest mezzanine; but when we look up past the chandeliers, two immense cylindrical crystal tassels, the ceiling, a reddish cartridge-copper studded with unpunctured cartridge-tops, contracts the vertiginous hall to the shape of a straight tin canteen. The doors that swing into the auditorium are bossed with bronze plaques by Paul Manship, on which, interposing the Orient between Roxy and his vaudeville art, he manages to reduce the idea of a song-and-dance team, a trained seal act, a wild animal act, etc., to a conventionalized roundness and smoothness.

And where today are the still-lives of Picasso, Leger, and Braque?—they lie like autumn leaves underfoot, their banjos and guitars, their broken surfaces, uniformly brown and gray now, trodden into the pattern of the carpet, which stretches away and away. It stretches up a giant staircase which mounts to a greenish and brownish mural: "the upward march of mankind" in dim unconvincing figures and pale decorative colors.

The Grand Lounge down in the basement suggests a cave of mystery at Coney Island. Large bright gray diamonds in the ceiling shed a sort of indoor twilight on dim gray diamonds on the floor. Diamond-shaped pillars, black and polished, reflect the lounge as a maze of lozenges. On a background of pale

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crinkled curtains, zigzagged with zebra stripes, a number of big, round, frameless mirrors take the pillars as polished black streaks. A dancer, dull silver, by Zorach, a giantess with legs like thick lead pipes and a rounded wad of hair like a lead sinker, kneels stiffly and stiff-neckedly turns her head.

The auditorium itself, admirable from the point of view of comfort, looks like the inside of a telescopic drinking-cup. Under magnificent looped-up portières of old gold, revealed by another curtain that opens and closes like a camera shutter and needs thirteen electric motors to work it, and to the music of a gigantic orchestra that rises all in one piece on an elevator, a veritable grandstandful of girls in green and red Indian head-dresses and equipped with tambourines and fans, sing "My Old Kentucky Home," "Dixie" and other beloved Southern melodies with a vast heart-shaped lace valentine for background.

In the center sits poor old De Wolf Hopper keeping time with one foot. It is about the only thing he can do. You feel melancholy as you see him and Weber and Fields, ineffective in the enormous theater, getting off lines which must certainly have been handed them, about the greatness of Rockefeller Center. First, you reflect, there was Weber and Fields, a show that people visited like a household; then there were the "extravaganzas," with favorite funny men and fairy-tale plots, "Blue Beard," "The Wizard of Oz," "Babes in Toyland," etc., usually framed in the gold proscenium and the blue and green peacocks of the New Amsterdam; then, later, there were the Hippodrome shows, which, though too big for personalities or plots, though lacking in human interest, had something of the excitement of a circus; then there were the Ziegfeld Follies which, framed richly by the New Amsterdam peacocks again caught the speed, the intensity, the savagery, the luxury, the dazzle of New York. And now there is the Radio City Music Hall, the most elaborate theater ever built—a theate

A Great Dream Come True

not merely too huge for personality, story, intensity, but actually too big for a show.

The performance with which the Music Hall opened scarcely survived even the first night. On such a stage, the frame, however gorgeous, was so far away from the actor that it could no longer focus interest on him: he might as well have been trying to hold an audience in the Grand Concourse of the Pennsylvania Station. Even the girls were unable to make an impression except by appearing in quantity and executing "precision" dances suggestive of setting-up exercises. It would be amusing if they were really controlled by a photo-electric cell. The comedians and the singers have actually had electrical processes applied to them: though their faces may go for nothing, their voices have been swollen by loud speakers (fifty) till they devour the whole house. And they also talk into microphones for radio audiences—with an effect rather disconcerting and irritating on the audience in the theater who have paid; the theater is no longer really a theater, but merely a source of canalized entertainment; the performance is no longer your performance, but something directed at thousands of old ladies sitting around in mortgaged farmhouses, at thousands of men reading the paper on the beds of Statler Hotels.

As for the program, there was a tabloid version of "Carmen," like one of those fifteen-minute movie prologues, which in this case had the added demerit of not leading up to a movie. And at one point a mass demonstration of toe dancers burst out of surprise entrances in the audience, thronged down to the stage, grouped itself as a great white wedding cake, and enacted the death of a Long Island swan farm on a slowly revolving turntable. A serious German dancer who seemed to have been injected into the show in the same spirit in which Manship and Lachaise had been invited to contribute to the building—as a result of Roxy's imperial desire to have a little of the best of every-

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thing—this unfortunate German dancer had apparently missed fire so badly in the first two or three performances with a ballet called "The Angel of Death" that it was found necessary to provide him with a humorous announcer who gave a kidding account of the scenario and caused some to think it was meant to be funny.

Nor was the spectacle confined to the stage. With every new number, the auditorium itself changed color like the inside of a chameleon watermelon. It was supposed to be "a stylized sunset, an idea conceived by Roxy while standing on a ship's deck at dawn." The half-circle of the stage is the sun and the watermelon stripes are rays, which run through a gamut of lavender on green, red on green, red on red, etc. There are no less than two hundred spotlights, each capable of forty changes. Two mighty-lunged cathedral organs played "Leave the Dishes in the Sink."

And Roxy himself, the Sun-King, had quarters befitting his rank! Above the Music Hall he had installed for himself an apartment of which the furnishings and equipment—charged to the Rockefellers as part of the opening expenses—cost \$250,000. There was a dining room nineteen feet high with a different solid silver service for each of the three meals, and there was a dining staff which included a cook, a pastry cook, two ordinary waiters and a headwaiter. These were supposed to be in constant readiness to serve a dinner for as many as thirty people without notice. The pots and pans in the kitchen alone cost \$2,200.

But Roxy was unable the first week properly to do the honors. Though the Rockefellers, Owen D. Young, Will Hay and Nicholas Murray Butler all loyally attended his openings the auspices were ominous already. Roxy himself had fallen ill and the night of the second opening was removed from the theater on a stretcher. It was decided that the Radio City Music

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Hall, though a flop on an unprecedented scale, was unmistakably, irretrievably, a flop, and that it would have to be turned into a movie theater.

When Roxy had gotten well enough to be interviewed, he was invited to make a statement on the depression. "All you can do," he said, "is spread your feet a little wider and stand it. Don't ever sell this country short. We'll all be proud of this country some day. Proud of America like an Englishman is proud of England after he has gone to see 'Cavalcade!'"

I remember him as I saw him once years ago, with his little round head and direct talk, in some discussion with other movie people. I remember how his energy and assurance seemed to contrast with the qualities of the rest. And I reflect that it is perhaps one of the tragedies of the boom that Sam Rothafel should have been allowed to make a fool of himself on so immense and blatant a scale.

Apparently the only person pleased by the opening of Radio City Music Hall was a veteran financier who had in his time been given the worst of it by Rockefeller. "Think of that son-of-a-bitch Rockefeller," he is said to have exclaimed with jubilation, "losing \$100,000 a week!"

V. Inaugural Parade

EVERYTHING is gray today. From a distance, the dome of the Capitol looks like gray polished granite and in the bleak March sky has a sort of steel-engraving distinction. Close to, the big building seems a replica of itself in white rubber; clouds in colorless light threaten rain or snow. An aluminum blimp hangs below them.

The people seem dreary, and they are curiously apathetic.

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The Washington banks have closed, the banks throughout the country are closing; and, though the newspapers are trying to conceal the news that New York and Illinois have given up, there creeps over us through all the activity and pomp the numbness of life running out. The people's prosperity has vanished; even the banks don't know where the money is; even the banks say they haven't got it; so they are simply shutting up, no more checks cashed; general blankness and dismay. And what seems a circumstance of bad omen, Thomas Walsh, the most popular member of the Cabinet, has died suddenly on the eve of taking office.

They wait in the park in front of the Capitol. "What are those things that look like little cages?" "Machine guns," says a woman with a giggle. They wait till they see Roosevelt's dim figure on the platform on the Capitol steps, hear dimly the accents of his voice—then the crowd rapidly thins.

And even when you read them, the phrases of the speech seem shadowy—the echoes of Woodrow Wilson's eloquence without Wilson's exaltation behind them. The old unctuousness, the old pulpit vagueness: "in every dark hour of our national life," "and yet our distress comes from no failure of substance—we are stricken by no plague of locusts," "where there is no vision the people perish," "the money changers have fled from their high seats in the temple of our civilization," "our true destiny is not to be ministered unto but to minister to ourselves and to our fellow men." The old Wilsonian professions of plain-speaking followed by the old abstractions: "I am certain that on this day my fellow Americans expect that . . . I will address them with a candor and a decision which the present situation of our people impels. This is pre-eminently the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly," etc. So what? So in finance we must "restore to the ancient truths" the temple from which the money-changers have fled; so in

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the field of foreign affairs, he "would dedicate this nation to the policy of the good neighbor."

There is a warning, itself rather vague, of a possible dictatorship.

The first part of the parade is dignified.

Preceded by well-drilled motorcycles and a squadron of khaki cavalry leaning forward as they briskly canter with their sabers against their shoulders, the silk hats and the admiral's gold-braided bicorne roll along in open cars on their way from the Capitol to the White House. Roosevelt smiles his smug public smile, taking off his high hat and calling back to greetings from the crowd. "He looks like Wilson, doesn't he?" says a woman. "The glasses and pointed nose look like Wilson." Another woman, as she shows her neighbor a newspaper picture of the President graciously receiving Hoover in his car, says: "He looks so aristocratic, I think!" Mrs. Roosevelt sits beside him, small, dark and unpretentious, smiling, her little round black hat tilted fashionably over one ear.

A space of waiting; the weather is getting colder. The parade proper begins. The branches of the service pass first. Chief of Staff, General Douglas MacArthur, who drove the veterans out of Washington last summer; the flare of flags of the First Division; the Knickerbocker Cadets, tall and rigid, in gray; marines in clean white caps and gaiters, with a red and yellow rattlesnake flag; bluejackets; Negroes in khaki, always with a white officer at their head; khaki trucks, khaki anti-aircraft guns; a new kind of short black machine-gun as perfect and shiny as the little screw-out pencils that people used to wear on watch-chains; stretchers; a drum-major in a white shako; the blue Richmond Blues, the gray Richmond Grays, and the red and gray Richmond Howitzers, all with white plumes and pre-Civil-War uniforms. It is fun to hear "The West Point Cadets'

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March," and "The Stars and Stripes Forever"—they bring back the America of boyhood: the imperial Roosevelt, the Spanish War. And the airplanes against the dark sky, flying in groups of nine and moving as they reach the reviewing stand into exact little patterns like jackstones, awaken a moment's pride in American technical precision.

But from this point on—and there are something like three hours of it yet—the procession crazily degenerates. From recalling one of those college reunions where the classes dress up in fancy costumes, it takes on qualities of grotesque idiocy which make the Carnival at Nice look decorous.

It is the co-eds who first give it a musical-comedy air. The military delegation from Atlanta Tech High is headed by a pretty girl in a red coat and white pants with a white overseas cap and white Sam Browne belt. Another in high heels leads a company of girls in gray and blue. The John Marshall Cadet Corps from Richmond are handsome in long gray coats and red cloaks.

Now the Governors are coming, sandwiched in between bands. Delaware Post Number One have shiny steel trench helmets, sky-blue coats, white breeches and black puttees. Gifford Pinchot, in an open car, bows and takes off his hat in response to the cheers that follow him, with gestures willowy and courtly like the White Knight turned politician. But the next sound is a breeze of laughter. One of the bands has a funny drum-major, whose specialty is hip-wiggling and mincing: he puts one hand to his waist, holds it out marking the time with wrist limp and little finger extended, turns sideways and with a rumba-dancer's rhythm performs phallic billiard-shots with his baton. And the effect of the fairy drum-major is to impart to the features that come after him a circus-parade effect of clowning. He is followed immediately by Governor Ritchie, who looks like a silk-hatted Mr. Woodchuck out of one of

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Thornton Burgess's Bedtime Stories; he shakes a day-day with one gloved paw, and you expect to see the automobile go off with a blaze and a bang, and the silk hats tumbling in the arena.

There follows a strange little closed car with the blue Lone Star of Texas on the radiator. It has the streamlines of a small goblin army tank; and the spectators murmur as it passes that it cost ten thousand, thirty thousand dollars. The Green Trojans of Greensburg, Pennsylvania, are frog green with bersaglieri's feathered bonnets. The National Indian War Veterans are old men in a big green bus.

And as the weather grows darker and more ominous, the parade becomes more fantastic. The American Legion Posts, which dominate the later sections, startle, trouble and shock. Are these the implacable guardians of Americanism? There are legionnaires with bright blue coats and canary-yellow trench helmets; legionnaires in orange, as hussars; legionnaire drum and bugle corps, weaving fancy evolutions as they march. A great many women mixed up among them. One detachment of patriotic ladies wear red cloaks and blue and white plumes. The circus illusion is further heightened by a cute-kid cowboy on a donkey and by a man who marches all alone made up as Abraham Lincoln and whom you expect to see stop and do a clowning act—perhaps puff smoke out of his stovepipe hat.

Now the spectacle becomes phantasmagoric. Comic lodges and marching clubs go by. Men appear in curled-up shoes and fezzes, dressed in hideous greens, purples and reds. Indians, terribly fat, with terribly made-up squaws. A very large loose old Negro in a purple fez and yellow-edged cloak, carrying the prong of an antler as if it were the Golden Bough. The airplanes overhead have been replaced by an insect-like autogyro, which trails a big advertising banner: "Re-Tire with Lee's Tires." The Negro lady hussars wear gorgeous bright purple

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stockings. The Spirit of '76 have all the appearance of being cockeyed: one of the trio is always getting behind and then running to catch up with the others. Real Cherokees in white-fringed suits and headdresses of pink-tipped feathers; one is on a horse, bareback, and sends a rustle through the crowd, who remark that he is practically naked.

A passage of real dignity and gravity ensues. The cornets of the New York Police Band, who "fear no music written" and march in dense blue formation, make an attention-compelling impact for solid ranks of the silk-hats of Tammany, which go on and on like an army. No fantasy and no frivolity: each marches in a dark coat and with a white carnation in his button-hole. Al Smith, red-faced, is in the front line with John F. Curry, and gives rise to a high wave of cheering. They are followed by a comic Dutchman wheeling a red, white and blue keg, and Miss Columbia leading the Queens County donkey.

But a mutter of expectation now agitates the crowd. Al Smith has had his ovation; but he is now to be eclipsed by Tom Mix. Not even the President is so popular. They catch sight of his white suit and white sombrero while he is still several blocks away, and they go wild with delight as he rides by, making his beautiful little pony, jet black in its silver harness, dance. He has come on as a part of the publicity for a new film called "42nd Street"—arriving in a royally appointed and electric-bulb-studded train labeled "The Better Times Gold and Silver Leaf Special," with an assortment of Hollywood beauties.

The beauties are featured on a "Better Times Float," which resembles a street merry-go-round. As it is pulled along, it revolves, exhibiting the waving girls, who are posed on summery wicker couches, against a background of giant tulips and under a canopy of yellow and red.

But Hollywood is nothing to the marching clubs. An uncanny

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music now tickles the ear, and ambiguous figures loom, out of Little Nemo's Adventures in Slumberland. Some seem half-Indian, half-angel, with feather headdresses that sweep to the ground; others (who get big applause) have hoods with spiky dorsal fins, like Martians in the barbershop weeklies; and all are clad in pale flowing female robes, tinted with celestial pinks and blues and making an effect of unpleasant iridescence such as sweat sometimes leaves on white shirts. As they move, they tease mosquito-buzzing dance music out of xylophones, banjos, guitars and violins. Interspersed are the Loew's Theaters Cadet Band; a drum-major who can juggle two batons; and a drunk with Leon Errol rubber legs, who ricochets back and forth and shakes hands with the people on the sidelines.

A small group from the Virgin Islands, soberly uniformed and quietly behaved, and a float of chilly-looking trained nurses, incongruously end the procession.

If the parade went on any longer, it would be too dark to see, too cold to stay out. And you are glad when it is over, anyway. The America it represented has burst, and as you watched the marchers, you realized that it had been getting sillier and sillier all the time.

The America of the boom definitely died today, and this is the ghost it just gave up.

VI. Shaw at the Metropolitan

IT was with feelings uncomfortably mixed that one listened to Bernard Shaw at the Metropolitan Opera House.

The most effective way to present the scene would be to use modern movie technique. First show the figure of Shaw in all

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its distinction and beauty. Slim and straight, in a double-breasted black coat buttoned up high under the collar with an austere effect almost clerical, so that it sets off the whiteness of his beard, as his eyebrows against his pink skin look like cotton on a department-store Santa Claus—he walks on and off the platform in his shiny black shoes with the lithe step, all but prancing, of a cavalier; clasps his long tapering hands around his knee, as he leans forward to talk to someone, with a self-consciousness of grace almost feminine; and diversifies his long speech with movements and gestures self-conscious and precise like an actor's. And there are also the reddish nose of the old Irishman, the squared shoulders with arms folded of the schoolmaster, the rare moments of silliness or shyness of the young man who learned to face the public "like an officer afflicted with cowardice, who takes every opportunity of going under fire to get over it and learn his business." All these are accommodated to an artistic creation of which Shaw's voice is the supreme expression. This voice has the fine qualities of his prose: with a charming accent, half-English, half-Irish—what the Irish call a Rathmines accent after the fashionable quarter of Dublin, an accent which says "expawts" when his voice rises, "exporrts" when it deepens, with a style from eighteenth-century Dublin in which phrases of the most commonplace modern slang start into vulgar relief, and in a tone of old-fashioned courtesy which varies between the kindly and the sarcastic, he caresses and enchants the auditor with the music of a master of speech, enmeshing him, though less surely than in his books, by the strands of a skein of ideas of which he reels out the endless thread.

Here in this black arrowy figure, this lovely cultivated voice, is the spirit which for those of us who were young when Shaw had reached the height of his power, permeated our minds for a time, stirring new intellectual appetites, exciting our sense

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of moral issues, sharpening the focus of our sight on the social relations of our world till we could see it as a vividly lit stage full of small, distinct, intensely conceived characters explaining their positions to each other. It was an explanation that burned like a poem. And here is the poet still burning.

Now widen the scope of the camera, and take in the double row of dignitaries on the platform behind the speaker. Trustees of the Academy of Political Science, under whose auspices Shaw is appearing: a bank president and a Morgan partner; Archibald Henderson; Walter Lippmann; odd liberal ladies and editors of second-rate magazines—the kind of committee one might expect for a lecture by John Drinkwater or Norman Angell.

Now widen the scope again: pull the camera back and swing it up toward the ceiling of the theater. The straight black figure diminishes: it stands at the bottom of a gulf—the immense well of the Metropolitan with its ugly and stale decorations: the heavy tarnished gold of the proscenium arch, the gilt boxes lined with red plush and embellished with electric bulbs which themselves have a red-plushy aspect. Tier upon tier of boxes drops down; balcony after balcony. The tall slim figure behind the pulpit is all but drowned at the bottom. All about him gapes a vast dumb audience—thousands and thousands of people who have bought seats to a show at the Metropolitan.

In the orchestra one recognizes a type not unlike the regular opera-goer: old ladies and old gentlemen in evening clothes—the members, presumably, of the Academy. But who are all the rest?—who knows? We know them but we cannot name them. They are the eerie half-human attendants at anything that is new on Broadway—the dead-pans of the Theatre Guild openings. They never laugh and they never applaud—they never seem to know what the play is about—if they ever respond at all, it is only to grumble a little when it is over. They have turned out tonight to see Shaw with the same simple photo-

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tropic instinct which draws them to the other entertainments by which they never seem to be entertained. They come, they take their seats, the curtain goes up revealing a set, and for a moment the brightly lighted scene appears to command their attention; but they are confronted with situations to be followed, long passages of dialogue to be sat through, emotions to be entered into, developments of ideas to be grasped, and—though the plays are getting thinner and thinner, feebler and feebler, in deference to them—they don't understand it, don't like it; they just sit there—sullen? sour? Again one cannot say, one cannot know how they respond to stimuli.

Before this awful tribunal of trolls, then, more dismaying because they never pass sentence—poor Bernard Shaw appeared. During the earlier part of his speech, he was driven to comment on the silence which followed his most emphatic points. It was not till about halfway through that he evoked any spontaneous enthusiasm, and this was only from a special quarter. When, after dealing with social-economic issues in rather a gingerly fashion, he finally said that the sole argument by which the capitalist system had been able to justify itself had been that, in spite of its inequalities in the distribution of wealth, it could guarantee a living wage to the working class, and came out with the assertion that a crisis which left millions unemployed meant the breakdown of the system—a burst of clapping was heard from the highest balcony. Shaw looked up in surprise. "I confess," he said, "the splendor of this building had blinded me to the fact that the majority of my audience apparently belong to the unemployed!"

But it was not the majority of his audience: it was only some radicals in the dollar seats. They broke into applause again when he said that, in financing the War, America had gotten "pretty fair value for her money from the political point of view," because she had "achieved the salvation of Russia"—and now and

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then at similar statements; but when one looked down into the shirt-fronts of the orchestra where the seats were five dollars apiece, one could not see a pair of hands stirring. One man in the next-to-top gallery remarked after two or three of these salvos: "The gallery seem to be having a good time!" as if he had no idea what Shaw was saying nor why the people should clap him nor why he himself should have come; and this man gave the tone of the house.

Shaw himself seemed to feel it. From the breakdown of capitalism and the salvation of Russia, he picked his way through detours highly circumspect. He achieved one good satiric stroke in telling us that we ought to be pleased to have helped, by taking part in the War, to turn Russia into a Communist state, as otherwise we should have had to contend with another great imperialist power, and that we should hope for the same reasons for a Communist China. But he leaned a little far backwards in praising Stalin's 100-percent nationalism and telling his audience not to "bother so much about Karl Marx."

This strange injunction, which he delivered toward the end and just before acknowledging his debt to Henry George (which also pleased the top balcony, but left everybody else blank) indicates very clearly the incongruities of the occasion. Most of the people whom Shaw was addressing had never bothered about Karl Marx at all; that they were hardly likely to bother about him too much, Shaw had recognized in kidding them about Russia, when he had said, "If you do not like to establish Communism among yourselves, if you cannot appreciate Communism," etc. It was only the people in the top balcony who had bothered about Marx. And Bernard Shaw would certainly never have laid any such injunction on these latter people nor insisted in just that way on Stalin's nationalism, if he had been talking to them alone. In the beginning, he had not been able to feel out precisely what kind of audience he was up against—

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he seems to have supposed that the Academy of Political Science was a serious and alert organization—and by the end he found himself trying to talk to two different and irreconcilable elements: what he evidently imagined, on the one hand, to be a regular after-dinner speaker's audience of conventional after-dinner dodos, and, on the other, a certain number of radicals. And, tacking between the two, he navigated his course with difficulty—baffled, no doubt, even further by the fog of the radio audience which was dense all about him outside, an audience even more mixed, and infused with sufficient hostile sentiment so that it sent in several hundred complaints while the speech was still going on.

Yet the ambiguity of the occasion was the ambiguity of Shaw himself. Why could he not have spoken under the auspices of some Socialist organization, to whom he could have talked directly and who would have met him with a positive response? After all, it is not his visit to New York which has taught Shaw his after-dinner manner, which has made him the idol and prey of the press. He has allowed himself, with less justification, to suffer the fate of Mark Twain: he has become a favorite public character. Though it is his very dramatist's gift, making it inevitable that he should dramatize himself, which has delivered him into the hands of modern publicity, the effect is, nevertheless, a little compromising. After all, why should he be making public speeches in which he has to handle like hot potatoes convictions which were once incandescent and with which he once dazzled our eyes? His training as a public speaker has been valuable in giving him what acting on the stage gave Shakespeare, Molière and Ibsen and what every great dramatist seems to have needed: first-hand knowledge of the reactions of an audience. But why should he keep it up? Why should he do it on such a large scale? He can write so much better than he speaks. In his speaking, the elaborations of his thought which

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in his writing would be assigned to subordinate clauses give the effect of halting digressions; and to make over his ideas into after-dinner jokes he is obliged to disguise them, to blur them. If he never talked to reporters at all, they would never misrepresent him. But his relation to the bourgeois press and its public has become a vital part of him. If the poet still keeps his insight into the larger life of mankind, the bourgeois entertainer is getting gaga with the bourgeoisie. Today, as appeared in his New York address, the Spenglerian vision of doom bulks as large as the socialist hope.

Shaw carries his own paradoxes within him; yet it is still his poet's distinction that he can study and understand himself, that through the arguing characters of his plays he can give these paradoxes expression. And even in his public character, less authentic though it is than his literary one, he can still thrill us from time to time, as he is able to make the timbre of the old daring, the old piercing intellectual clarity, ring out amid the banalities of the lecturer. Even in the pompous opera house and before the dead bourgeois audience which he himself has let himself in for, he continues to stand for something which makes us see audience and theater—and Bernard Shaw himself—as we have never quite seen them before.

VII. Sunshine Charley

A YOUNG college man, according to a legend of the boom, went to work at the National City Bank. One day Charles E. Mitchell, then its president, came through on a tour of inspection. "Mr. Mitchell," said the young man in a low voice, "may I speak to you for a moment?" The great banker and bond salesman scowled: "What is it?" he demanded. The young man

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politely pressed him to step aside out of earshot of the others present. Still scowling, Mitchell complied. Said the young man in a gentle whisper: "Your trousers are unbuttoned, sir." "You're fired!" flashed the great financier.

In those days the trousers of Charles E. Mitchell could no more be unbuttoned than Louis the Fourteenth's grammar could be at fault. He was the banker of bankers, the salesman of salesmen, the genius of the New Economic Era. He was the man who had taken the National City Company, that subsidiary of the National City Bank which had been established, according to the practice of the New Economic Era, as an institution legally distinct but actually identical with the bank, to set up shop for the disposal of securities which the bank was prohibited from selling, and had transformed it in six years' time from a room with a stenographer, a boy and a clerk into an organization with a staff of 1400 and branch offices all over the country, which sold a billion and a half dollars' worth of securities a year, the largest corporation in the country. At its summit, like an emperor, sat Mitchell, dynamic, optimistic and insolent, sending out salesmen in all directions as he preached to them, bullied them, bribed them; had them clerking in security shops on the street level of every provincial city where they sold bonds like groceries in A. and P. stores; had them knocking at the doors of rural houses like men with vacuum cleaners or Fuller brushes; had them vying with each other in bond-selling contests; had them intoxicated, hypnotized, drugged, always afraid of being fired if they failed to sell more and more bonds—"You cannot stand still in this business!—you fellows are not *Self-Starters!*"—till they would resort to faking orders merely to inflate their figures and invest their own salaries in these securities about whose value they knew as little as the people they were selling them to.

The days of the highly respectable banker who advised

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widows and young people, were over. The public had the salesmen always at their heels; the salesmen had always behind them the megaphone voice, the indomitable jaw, the nagging telegrams, of Mitchell. He sold the American public in ten years over fifteen billion dollars' worth of securities. He sold them the stock of automobile companies presently to dissolve into water; he sold them the bonds of South American republics on the verge of insolvency and revolution; he sold them the stock of his own bank, which after October, 1929, dropped in three weeks from \$572 to \$220 and which was recently worth \$20. In the minds of the public, of his minions, of himself, Charles E. Mitchell had reached an apotheosis. In his days of greatness, it was boasted, he always traveled by special train. One of his salesmen, who was afterwards ruined by his investments in the Mitchell securities, described his master's brain as "spinning like a great wheel in a Power House" and spoke almost with trembling of the terror he inspired; and Bruce Barton, when Mitchell had taken him up into the Bankers' Club and shown him the kingdoms of New York from the window, prostrated himself before him in the pages of the *American Magazine*. When bond salesmen came to him, he told Barton, complaining they were unable to find buyers, he always took them up into the Bankers' Club and said to them: "Look down there! There are six million people with incomes that aggregate thousands of millions of dollars. They are just waiting for someone to come and tell them what to do with their savings. Take a good look, eat a good lunch, and then go down and tell them! If there is nothing in that picture which stirs a man's imagination, he doesn't belong in New York!" It was not long after this that Bruce Barton, whose father had been a minister, announced that Jesus Christ's true mission had been that of the Supreme Salesman. Mitchell blazed like the great central source of the

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energy and heat of the boom: his colleagues called him "Sunshine Charley."

Today that sunshine has faded. Charley Mitchell looks cheap in court. Through long sessions of the muggy June weather while the reporters go to sleep at their table and the judge invites the jury to take their coats off, among the pallid creatures of the courtroom whose skins seem never to have known any light save that of the soapy globes of the chandeliers, whose fat legs seem never to have known any exercise save stalking the courtroom floor, he sits behind the wooden railing that separates the spectators from the trial, broad-shouldered but short-legged, his grizzled hair growing down his neck and forehead, his long nose with its blunt end no longer driving salesmen out to their prey but bent humbly down toward the table. Against the neutral complexions and the tasteless clothes of the courtroom, he is conspicuous for his ruddy face and for the high stiff white collar, the blue serge suit, the white handkerchief sticking out of the breast pocket, of the big downtown days of the boom. Behind him, ledgers, suitcases, crammed briefcases, are all that is left of those days—those dizzying profits, those mammoth transactions, the millennial boasts of the bankers, the round-eyed hopes of the public, now merely a tableful of papers which has to be produced in court.

Sitting quiet, looking often toward the clock, he listens to the witnesses called to testify as to whether or not his sale to his wife of certain shares of National City Bank stock, his sale of certain other shares of Anaconda Copper stock, and his failure to report \$666,666.67 from the management fund of the National City Bank, were devices to evade the income tax. Max Steuer, Mitchell's lawyer, has called him a "big fish victim of mob hysteria"; and the idea of big fish haunted me as I watched the officials of J. P. Morgan and of the National City Bank

Sunshine Charley

trying not to get their bosses into trouble. The boom produced its own human type, with its own physical and psychological characteristics, its own more overblown and softer-headed species of the American business man. Enormous and with no necks, they look like hooked and helpless frogs or like fat bass or logy groupers hauled suddenly out of the water and landed gasping on the stand. They pant, they twitch in their seat, they make gestures finlike and feeble—one can imagine great gills behind their jowls straining to breathe the alien air. One man recalls with hideous exactitude those strange monsters dragged up by William Beebe from the depths of the South Seas: the same head that seems bigger than the body, the same gaping mouth of long sharp teeth, the same nose flattened down to nothing to give scope to the undershot jaw. The only thing lacking in the financier is the natural fishing-rod with its hooks and its luminous bait which grows out of the forehead of the deep-sea anglers and catches the fish on which they feed; and the imagination fills in this. The National City Bank has consummated some of the largest mergers on record; and it is reported that certain fish of this species can swallow fish five and a half times their length. Beebe says he found seven wild ducks in one of them.

Mitchell himself is a personality of more character, but he, too, is out of his element on the witness-stand. The great salesman of salesmen is washed up, and the two Jewish lawyers fight over him. Steuer speaks so gently, works so quietly—shrunken, round-shouldered, round-headed, bald, with a sallow, old, shrewd, Semitic face—that all the spectators can catch of his case is a faint continual lisp. With little round mouse ears sticking out from the side of his head, he mouses between the jury, the judge and the witness, keeping the whole thing deeply discreet. George Medalie has solidity and weight, and instead of hushing his cross-examination, he launches his questions distinctly in

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tones of metallic sarcasm and moves back to make the witness speak louder when he wants to bring an answer out. Mitchell seems almost as uncomfortable with the one as with the other.

At the prompting of Steuer, he tells deliberately a very halting story. The sales were real sales, his wife really wanted to buy the stock, he had the very best legal advice to guarantee their legality, etc. When he pledged his personal resources to help the National City Company buy National City Bank stock during the first stock-market crash, he had not hoped to get anything out of it, he had merely been trying to save the bank. Yet Mrs. Mitchell, Medalie shows, had not had enough income to pay even the interest on the loan from Morgan which would have been necessary to carry the stock she was supposed to have bought; no transfer stamps had been attached to the letter recording the sale; and afterwards Mitchell had bought the stock back from his wife at exactly the same price. He had bought the other stock back, too; and the \$666,666.67 which is asserted by the defense to have been a loan, had, according to the prosecution, been written off the books of the bank as if it had been a bonus.

On the stand, Mitchell's prestige evaporates. The perfect type of the big executive of the cigarette and success-course advertisements undergoes a degradation. Confronting the lawyers with his blue suit, his robust torso and grizzled crest, with his scowling brows of power and his forceful nose joined by coarse lines to his wide and common mouth, he throws out his hands in stock gestures of frankness and exposition, making things clear weakly; tries to put over points with a finger that no longer carries conviction; breaks down in the middle of sentences, frowning helplessly, his mouth hanging open. In reply to questions featured by his attorney, "I did!" "I certainly did!" he declares with the ham dramatic emphasis of a movie actor playing the role of a big executive. And there is a suggestion of the

racetrack about him—yes, he used to take bets on securities. It has been a mannerism of Mitchell's to hitch one eyebrow up and pull the other portentously down as if he were squinting into the mysteries of finance which ordinary people couldn't penetrate, but which to him revealed refulgent visions. Year after year, as the depression deepened, still did his prophecies never fail. But today the shaggily squinted eye seems shying at awkward questions.

It is wrong to take out on individuals one's resentment at general abuses. Charley Mitchell, the investment superman, could never of course have been created without the mania of the public to believe in him. It was the climate and soil of the boom which made of the ambitious young man who had worked his way through Amherst by giving courses in public speaking, the smart clerk at Western Electric who used to pay out part of his weekly \$10 to take business courses at night-school—it was the climate and soil of the boom which nurtured this being and his fellows. So the eyes of the fishes of the dark ocean depths become eventually atrophied and blind, so they learn to excrete their luminous mucus; so dwelling below the level where a diet of plants is possible, they develop their valise-like carnivorous jaws.

And it is cruel to expose the discomfiture of a man enduring deep humiliation. But all the prosperity writers these many years have been laboring to build up Charley Mitchell as a respectable public figure. And they are still at it: the newspaper reporters at the trial have worked hard to provide him with a firmness of front which he certainly did not display when I saw him. One financial paper, in particular, has grown emotional and almost poetic in describing the melting effect of Mitchell's testimony. The auditors, it says, as they heard him, relived the great days of expansion—for a moment the pulse throbbed,

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the spirit lifted, as they recalled that lost faith and hope—how could they refuse to put themselves in the place of their tragically mistaken leader, how could they find it in their hearts to condemn him? Well, it is time that we ceased to allow the financial pages of the papers to determine our impressions and moods. Charley Mitchell has been arrested at the orders of the President of the United States, and while we have got him, let us take a good look at him. The head of the biggest financial institution in the country, whose arrogance was lately so great that it was reputed to constitute *lèse majesté* to tell him his pants were unbuttoned and who, proceeding in the same spirit, apparently, did not even consider it necessary to go through the barest formalities of covering up his deals against the income tax, is a man with a full-fleshed common face and a fierce unconvincing eye—a man of a low order, caught in suspicious circumstances and hard put to it to talk himself out.

VIII. The Old Stone House

AS I go north for the first time in years in the slow, the constantly stopping, milk train, which carries passengers only in the back part of the hind car and has an old stove to heat it in winter, I look out through the dirt-yellowed double pane and remember how once, as a child, I had felt thwarted till I had gotten the windows up so that there should be nothing between me and the widening pastures, the great boulders, the black and white cattle, the rivers, stony and thin, the lone elms like feather dusters, the high air which sharpens all outlines, makes all colors so breath-takingly vivid, in the clear light of late afternoon.

The little stations again: Barneveld, Stittville, Steuben—a

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tribute to the Prussian soldier who helped drill our troops for the Revolution. The woman behind me in the train talks to the conductor with a German accent. They came over here for land and freedom.

Boonville: that pale boxlike building, smooth gray, with three floors of slots that look in on darkness and a roof like a flat overlapping lid—cold, dark, clear air, fresh water. Like nothing else but upstate New York. Rivers running easily among stones, or deeper, stained dark with dead leaves. I used to love to follow them—should still. A fresh breath of water off the Black River, where the blue closed gentians grow. What forests, what hillsides, what distant falls!

There was never any train to Talcottville. Our house was the center of the town. It is strange to get back now: it seems not quite like anything else I have ever known. But is this merely the apparent uniqueness of places associated with childhood?

The settlers of this part of New York were a first westward migration from New England. At the end of the eighteenth century they drove ox-teams from Connecticut and Massachusetts over into the wild northern country below Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence, and they established here an extension of New England.

Yet an extension that was already something new. I happened last week to be in Ipswich, Massachusetts, the town from which my grandfather's family emigrated; and, for all the pride of white houses with green blinds, I was oppressed by the crampedness of Boston. Even the House of the Seven Gables, which stimulated the imagination of Hawthorne, though it is grim perhaps, is not romantic. It, too, has the tightness and self-sufficiency of that little provincial merchant society, which at its best produced an intense little culture, English in its concrete-

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ness and practicality—as the block letters of the signs along the docks make Boston look like Liverpool. But life must have hit its head on those close and low-ceilinged coops. That narrowness, that meagerness, that stinginess, still grips New England today: the drab summer cottages along the shore seem almost as slit-windowed and pinched as the gray twin houses of a mill-town like Lawrence or Fall River. I can feel the relief myself of coming away from Boston to these first uplands of the Adirondack wilderness, where, sustained by the New England religion, still speaking the language of New England, the settlers found limitless space. They were a part of the new America, now forever for a century on the move.

They moved on before they had been able to build here anything comparable to the civilization of New England. The country, magnificent and vast, has never really been humanized as New England has: the landscape still overwhelms the people. But this house, the only one of its kind among farms and wooden towns of later periods, was an attempt to found a civilization. And it blends in a peculiar fashion the amenities of the eastern seaboard with the rudeness and toughness of the frontier.

It was built at the end of the eighteenth century: the first event recorded in connection with it is a memorial service for General Washington. And it took four years in the building. The stone had to be quarried out of the river. The walls of the house were a foot and a half thick, and the plaster was applied to the stone without any intervening lattice. The beams were secured by enormous nails, made by hand and some of them eighteen inches long. Solid and simple as a fortress, the place has also the charm of something which has been made to order. There is a front porch with white wooden columns which support a white wooden balcony, running along the second floor. The roof comes down close over the balcony, and the balcony

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and the porch are draped with vines. Large ferns grow along the porch, and there are stone hitching posts and curious stone ornaments, cut out of the quarry like the house: on one side, a round-bottomed bowl in which red geraniums bloom, and on the other, an unnamable object, crudely sculptured and vaguely pagodalike. The front door has real beauty: the door is dark green with a brass knocker, and the woodwork which frames it is white: it is crowned by a wide fanlight and flanked by two narrow panes of glass in which a white filagree of wood makes a webbing like ice on winter ponds. On one of the broad sides of the house, where the mortar has come off the stone, there is a dappling of dark gray under pale gray like the dappling of light in shallow water, and the feathers of the elms make dapplings of sun among their shadows of large lace on the grass.

The lawn is ungraded and uneven like the pastures, and it merges eventually with the fields. Behind, there are great clotted masses of myrtle beds, lilac bushes, pink phlox, and other things I can't identify; pink and white hollyhocks, some of them leaning, fine blue and purple dye of larkspur; a considerable vegetable garden with long rows of ripe gooseberries and currants, a patch of yellow pumpkin flowers, and bushes of raspberries, both white and red—among which are sprinkled like confetti the little flimsy California poppies, pink, orange, white and red. In an old dark red barn where the hayloft is almost collapsing, I find spinning wheels, a carder, candle molds, a patent bootjack, obsolete implements of carpentry, little clusters of baskets for berry-picking, and a gigantic pair of scales, such as is nowadays seen only in the hands of allegorical figures.

The house was built by the Talcotts, after whom the town is named. They owned the large farm in front of the house, which stretches down to the river and beyond. They also built

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a grist-mill, but were thought—I learn from the county history—to have “adopted a policy adverse to the building up of the village at the point where natural advantages greatly favored,” for they “refused to sell village lots to mechanics, and retained the water power on Sugar River, although parties offered to invest liberally in manufactures.” In time, there was only one Talcott left, an old maid. My great-grandfather Baker, who lived across the street and had been left by the death of his first wife with a son and eight daughters, came over and married Miss Talcott. She was kind to the children, and they remembered her with affection. Great-grandfather Baker owned the quarry on the river just a little way from the house.

Most of the daughters, of whom my grandmother was one—“six of them beauties,” I am told—got married and went away. There was only one left in the house when I first remember Talcottville, my great-aunt Rosalind, the spinster daughter who was invariably included in the big old-fashioned families and whose rôle was to stay home and take care of her parents. Aunt “Lin” had devoted her life to her father. When I knew her, she was very old. It was impressive and rather frightening to call on her—you did it only by special arrangement, as she had to prepare herself to be seen. She would be beautifully dressed in a lace cap, a lavender dress and a white crocheted shawl, but she had become so bloodless and shrunken as dreadfully to resemble a mummy and reminded you uncomfortably of Miss Havensham in Dickens’s “Great Expectations.” She had a certain high and formal coquetry and was the only person I ever really knew who talked like the characters in old novels. When she had been able to get about, I am told, she had habitually treated the townspeople with a condescension almost baronial. According to the family legend, the great-grandmother of great-grandmother Baker had been a daughter of one of the Earls of Essex, who had eloped with a gardener to America.

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Another of my Baker great-aunts, whom I found one of the most interesting members of the family, had married and lived in the town and known tragic disappointments. Only intellectual interests and a mind capable of philosophic pessimism had maintained her through the wreck of her domestic life. She used to tell me how, as a young married woman, she had taught herself French by the dictionary and grammar, sitting up at night alone by the stove through one of their cold and dark winters. She had read a great deal of French, subscribed to French magazines, without being able to pronounce a word. She had rejected revealed religion and did not believe in immortality; and when she considered that she had been relieved of the last of her family obligations, though her hair was now beginning to turn gray, she came on to New York City and lived there for years alone, occupying herself with the theater, books, visits to her nephews and nieces, and all the spectacle and reading of the great world which she had always loved so much and from which she had spent her life removed.

When she died, only the youngest of the family was left, the only son, my great-uncle Tom. His mother must have been worn out with child-bearing—she died after the birth of this ninth child—and he had not turned out so well as the others. He had been born with no roof to his mouth and had to wear a gold palate, and it was difficult to understand him. He was not precisely simple-minded—he held a small political job under Cleveland and he usually beat you at checkers—but he was childlike and ill-equipped to deal with life in any very effective way. He sold the farm to a German and the quarry to the town. Then he died, and the house was empty, except when my mother and father would come here to open it up for a month or two in the summer.

I have not been back here in years, and I have never before examined the place carefully. It has become for me something

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like a dream—unreal with the powerful impressions of childhood. Even now that I am here again, I have to shake off the dream. I keep walking from room to room, inside and out, upstairs and down, with uneasy sensations of complacency which are always falling through into depression.

These rooms are admirably proportioned; the white mantel-pieces are elegant and chaste, and each is ornamented with a different design of carving. The big living-room seems a little bare because the various members of the family have claimed and taken away so many things; and there are some disagreeable curtains and carpets, for which my great-uncle Tom is to blame. But here are all the things they have in the antique stores: "How like an antique store!" I keep thinking. Red Bohemian glass decanters; a rusty silver snuff-box; a mirror with the American eagle painted at the top of the glass. Little mahogany tables with slim legs; a set of curly-maple furniture, deep seasoned yellow like satin; a yellow comb-backed rocker, with a design of green conch-shells like snails. A small bust of Dante with the nose chipped; a little old-fashioned organ stored here years ago by the church and never afterwards reclaimed. Large engravings of the family of Washington and of the Reformers Presenting their Famous Protest before the Diet of Spire; a later engraving of Charles Dickens. Old tongs and poker, impossibly heavy. A brown mahogany desk inlaid with yellow birdwood, with a pair of old steel-rimmed spectacles and a thing to shake sand on wet ink. Daguerreotypes in fancy cases: they seem to last much better than photographs—my grandmother looks fresh and cunning—I remember hearing that when my grandfather first saw her, she was riding on a load of hay—he came back up here to marry her as soon as he had gotten his medical degree. An old wooden flute—originally brought over from New England, I remember my great-uncle's telling me, in one of the ox-team loads—he used to get a lonely

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pipng out of it—I try it, but cannot make a sound. Two big oval paintings in gold frames, of landscapes mountainous and romantic: they came from the Utica house of great-grandfather Baker's brother—he married a rich wife and invented excelsior and was presented with a solid silver table service by the grateful city of Utica.

Wall-paper molded by the damp from the stone; uninviting old black haircloth furniture. A bowl of those enormous up-country sweet-peas, incredibly fragrant and bright—they used to awe and trouble me—why?

In the dining-room, a mahogany china-closet, which, in the days when letters were few and great-grandfather Baker was postmaster, used to be the village post-office. My grandmother's pewter tea-service with its design of oak-leaves and acorns, which I remember from her house in New Jersey. Black iron cranes, black pipkins and kettles, for cooking over the hearth; a kind of flat iron pitchfork for lifting the bread in and out when they baked at the back of the fireplace. On the sideboard, a glass decanter with a gilt black-letter label: "J. Rum." If there were only some rum in the decanter!—if the life of the house were not all past!—The kitchens that trail out behind are almost too old-smelling and deserted—in spite of the wonderful big brown crocks with blue long-tailed birds painted on them, a different bird on each crock.

In the ample hall with its long staircase, two large colored pictures of trout, one rising to bait, one leaping. Upstairs, a wooden pestle and mortar; a perforated tin box for hot coals that people took to keep their feet warm on sleigh-rides or in church; a stuffed heron; a horrible bust of my cousin Dorothy which her mother had had done of her in Germany, larger than life and with the hair-ribbon and ruffles faithfully reproduced in marble—Cousin Dorothy, who got to detest it, took it out and threw it into the pond, but Uncle Tom worked hard to

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dredge it up and quietly replaced it on its pedestal. An ugly chair with a round rag back; an ugly bed with the head of Columbus sticking out above the pillows like a figurehead. Charming old bedquilts with patterns of rhomboids in softened brown, greens and pinks, or of blue polka-dotted hearts that ray out on stiff phallic stalks. A footstool innocently covered in white, which, however, when you step on a tab at the side, opens up into a spittoon. (There used to be a musical chair, brought back from Germany along with the bust, but it seems to have disappeared.) A jar of dried rose leaves, and a jar of little pebbles and shells that keep their bright colors in alcohol.

The old panes up here have wavy lines in the glass. There are cobweb-filthy books, which I examine: many religious works, the annals of the state legislature, a book called "The Young Wife, or Duties of Women in the Marriage Relation," published in Boston in 1838 and containing a warning against tea and coffee, which "loosen the tongue, fire the eye, produce mirth and wit, excite the animal passions, and lead to remarks about ourselves and others, that we should not have made in other circumstances, and which it were better for us and the world, never to have made." But there is also, I noticed downstairs, Grant Allan's "The Woman Who Did," from 1893.

I come upon the History of Lewis County and read it with a certain pride. I say to myself that it is an excellent piece of work—admirably full in its information on flora and fauna, geology and politics; diversified with anecdotes and biographies never over-flattering and often pungent; and written in a sound English style. Could anyone in the county today, I wonder, command such a sound English style? I note with gratification that the bone of a prehistoric cuttlefish, discovered in one of the limestone caves of the river, is the largest of its kind on record, and that a flock of wild swans was seen here in 1821. In the eighties,

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there were still wolves and panthers. There are still bears and deer today.

I also look into the proceedings of the New York State Assembly. My great-grandfather Baker was primarily a politician and at that time a member of the Assembly. I have heard that he was a Jacksonian Democrat and that he made a furious scene when my grandmother came back from New Jersey and announced that she had become a Republican: it spoiled her whole visit. There is a photograph of him in an oval gilt frame, with his hair sticking out in three great spikes and a wide and declamatory mouth. I look into the record of the Assembly to see what rôle great-grandfather Baker played. It is the forties; the Democrats are still savage about the United States Bank. But when I look up great-grandfather Baker in the index, it turns out that he figured solely, though repeatedly, as either not being present or as requesting leaves of absence. They tell me he used to go West to buy cattle.

That sealed-up space on the second floor which my father had knocked out—who did they tell me was hidden in it?—a soldier? I see by one of the new historical road-signs that there are caves somewhere here where slaves were hidden. Maybe it was part of the underground route for smuggling Negroes over the border.—Is the attic, the “kitchen chamber,” which is always so suffocating in summer, still full of carpetbags and crinolines and bonnets and beaver-hats in the old cowhide-covered trunks? We used to dress up in them for charades.

It was the custom for the married Baker daughters to bring their children back in the summer; and their children in time brought their children. In those days, how I loved coming up here! It was a reunion with cousins from Boston and New York, Ohio and Wisconsin; we fished and swam in the rivers, had all sorts of excursions and games.—Later on, I got to dislike it: the older generation died, the younger ceased to come back. I

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wanted to be elsewhere, too. The very fullness with life of the past, the memory of those many families of cousins and uncles and aunts, made the emptiness of the present more oppressive.—Isn't it still?—didn't my gloom come from that, the night of my first arrival?—Wasn't it the dread of it that kept me away?—I am aware, as I walk through the rooms, of the amplitude and completeness of the place—the home of a large old-fashioned family, which had to be a city in itself. And not merely did it house a clan: the whole life of the community passed through it. Situated in the corner of the crossroads, it has been post-office and town hall—at one time great-grandfather Baker put up travelers on the Albany post-road. And now for five-sixths of the year it is nothing but a shell full of antiques, with no intimate relation to the community.

The community itself today is half the size of the community of those days, and its condition is very much changed. It is now merely one of the clusters of houses that people shoot through along the state highway; and there will presently perhaps be little left but our house confronting the hot-dog stand and the gas station.

For years I have had a recurrent dream. I take a road toward the west. It is summer; I pass by a strange summer forest, in which there are mysterious beings, though I know that, on the whole, they are benign. If I am fortunate and find the way, I arrive at a wonderful river, which runs among boulders and over rapids, between alders and high wild trees, through a countryside fresh, green and wide. We go in swimming; it is miles away from anywhere. We plunge in the smooth running pools. We make our way to the middle of the stream and climb up on the pale gray boulders and sit naked in the sun and the air, while the river flows away below us. And I know that it is the place I have always longed for, the place of wildness and free-

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dom to find which is the height of what one may hope for, the place of unalloyed delight.

As I walk about Talcottville now, I discover that the being-haunted forest is a big grove which even in the daytime used to be lonely and dark and where great white Canadian violets used to grow out of the deep black leaf-mold. Today it is no longer dark, because half the trees have been cut down. The river in the dream turns out to have been simply the farther and less frequented and more adventurous bank of Sugar River, which had to be reached by wading. Both river and forest are west of the main road, which accounts for my always taking that direction in my dream. I remember how Sugar River used to fascinate me so that I had the photographs I had taken of it enlarged and kept them in my room all winter. Today the hither bank has been completely blasted out to get stone for the new state highway, and what we used to call "the little falls" is gone.

I visit the house of my grand-aunt, and my gloom returns and overwhelms me. The huge root of an elm has split the thick slabs of the pavement so that you have to walk over a hump; and one of the big square stone fence-posts is toppling. Her flowers, with no one to tend them, go on raggedly blooming in their seasons. There has been nobody in her house since she died. It is all too appropriate to her pessimism—that dead end she always foresaw. As I walk around the house, I remember how, sitting there on the back porch, she once sang me old English ballads, including that gruesome one, "Oh, where have you been, Randall, my son?" about the man who had gone to "Pretty Peggy's" house and been given snakes to eat:

"What had you for supper, Randall, my son?"

"Fresh fish fried in butter. Oh, make my bed soon!

For I'm sick at my heart and I fain would lie down!"

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She was old then and dumpy and round-shouldered after the years when she had looked so handsome, straight-backed and with the fashionable aigrette in her hair. And the ballad seemed to have been drawn out of such barbarous reaches of the past, out of something so surprisingly different from the college women's hotels in New York in which I had always known her as living: that England to which, far though she had come from it, she was yet so much nearer than I—that queer and troubling world of legend which I had read about in Percy's "Reliques," but with which her own communications still seemed to be by word of mouth—for she sang it without a smile, completely possessed by its spirit—that it made my flesh creep and disconcerted me.

My great-aunt is dead, and all her generation are dead—and the new generations of the family have long ago left Talcottville behind and have turned into something quite different. They were already headed for the cities by the middle of the last century, as can be seen by the rapid dispersal of great-grandfather Baker's daughters. Yet there were a few, within my memory, who stayed on in this country as farmers. They were very impressive people, the survivors of a sovereign race who owned their own pastures and fields and governed their own community. Today their descendants perform minor functions in a machine which they do not control. They have most of them become thoroughly urbanized, and they are even farther from great-grandfather Baker than my grandmother, his daughter, was when she came back from New Jersey a Republican. One of her children, a retired importer in New York, was complaining to me the other day that the outrageous demands of the farmers were making business recovery impossible, and protesting that if the advocates of the income tax had their way, the leading people would no longer be able to live up to their social

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positions. A cousin, named after his original ancestor who came over to New York from Ipswich, a mining engineer on the Coast and a classmate and admirer of Hoover, invested and has lost heavily in Mexican real estate and the industrial speculation of the boom. Another, with another of the old county names, is now at the head of an organization whose frankly avowed purpose is to rescue the New York manufacturers from taxation and social legislation. He has seen his native city of Utica ruined by the removal of its textile mills to the South, where taxes are lighter and labor is cheaper; and he is honestly convinced that his efforts are directed to the promotion of civic betterment.

Thus the family has come imperceptibly to identify its interests with those of what great-grandfather Baker would have called the "money power." They work for it and acquiesce in it—they are no longer the sovereign race of the first settlers of Lewis County, and in the cities they have achieved no sovereignty. They are much too scrupulous and decent, and their tastes are too comparatively simple for them ever to have gotten away, during the years of expansion and plunder, with any conquests of real importance. They have still the frank accent and the friendly eye of the older American world, and they seem a little taken aback by the turn which things have been taking.

And what about me? As I come back in the train, I find that—other causes contributing—my depression of Talcottville deepens. I did not find the river and the forest of my dream—I did not find the romance of the past. I have been too close to the past: there in that house, in that remote little town which has never known any industrial progress since the Talcotts first obstructed the development of the water power of Sugar River, you can see exactly how rural Americans lived a century and a half ago. And who would go back to it? Not I. Let people who have never known country life complain

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that the farmer has been spoiled by his radio and his Ford. Along with the memory of exaltation at the immensity and freedom of that countryside, I have also memories of horror at its loneliness: a family I knew well burned one night in their house, where there was no fire department to save them, and husbands or wives left alone by death—the dark nights and the prisoning winters. I do not grudge the sacrifice of the Sugar River falls for the building of the new state highway and I do not resent the hot-dog stand. I am at first a little shocked at the sight of a transformer on the road between Talcottville and Boonville, but when I get to the Talcottville house, I am obliged to be thankful for it—no more oil-lamps in the evenings! And I would not go back to that old life if I could: that civilization—why idealize it?—was too lonely, too poor, too provincial.

I look out across the Hudson and see Newburgh: the little neat-windowed cubes of its dwellings and docks, distinct as if cut by a burin, built dense up the slope of the bank with an occasional simple steeple, undwarfed by the bulk of more modern buildings and with only the little old-fashioned ferry to connect it with the opposite side, might be still an eighteenth-century city. My father's mother came from over there. She was the granddaughter of a carpet importer from Rotterdam. From him came the big thick Spanish coins which the children of my father's family were supposed to cut their teeth on. The business, which had been a considerable one, declined as the sea trade of the Hudson became concentrated in New York. My father and mother, when they went years ago to visit the old store by the docks, were amazed to find a solitary old clerk still scratching up orders and sales on a slate that hung behind the counter.

And the old slate and the Spanish coins, representing though they do a kind of life slightly different from that evoked by

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Talcottville, associate themselves in my mind with such things as the old post-office turned china-closet. And as I happen to be reading Herndon's "Life of Lincoln," that, too, goes to flood out the vision with its extension still further west, still further from the civilized seaboard, of the life of the early frontier. Through Herndon's extraordinary memoir, one of the few really great American books of its kind, which America has never accepted, preferring to it the sentimentalities of Carl Sandburg and the ladies who write Christmas stories about Lincoln—the past confronts me even more plainly than through the bootjacks and daguerreotypes of Talcottville and makes me even more uneasy. Here you are back again inescapably amid the poverty and the crudeness of the frontier, and here is a man of genius coming out of it and perfecting himself in spite of it. The spectacle is not merely moving but agonizing. The boorish boy from the settler's clearing with nobody and nothing behind him, hoping that his grandfather had been a planter as my great-aunt Rosalind hoped that she was a descendant of the Earls of Essex, the morbid young man looking passionately toward the refinement and the training of the East but unable to bring himself to marry the women who represented it for him—re-joining across days in country stores, nights in godforsaken hotels—re-joining by heroic self-discipline the creative intelligence of the race, to find himself the conscious focus of its terrible unconscious parturition—his miseries burden his grandeur. At least they do for me at this moment.

"Old Abe Lincoln came out of the wilderness,
Out of the wilderness, out of the wilderness—"

The song comes back and awes me—the thought of Lincoln becomes almost unbearable.

Great-grandfather Baker's politics and the old Talcottville general store where people sat around and talked before the new

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chain store took its place—Lincoln's school was not so very much different. And I would not go back to that.

Yet as I walk up the steps of my house in New York, I recognize suddenly with a sinking that I have never been able to leave it. This old wooden booth I have taken between First and Second Avenues—what is it but the same old provincial America? And as I open the door with its loose knob and breathe in the musty smell of the stair carpet, it seems to me that I have not merely stuck in the same place but actually lost ground. This gray paintless clapboarded front, these lumpy and rubbed yellow walls—they were probably once respectable, but they must always have been commonplace. They have never had even the dignity and distinction of the house in Lewis County. But I have rented them because, before I came to New York, I had been used to living in houses and have grown to detest city apartments.

So here, it seems, is where I live: in an old, cramped, sour frame house, having failed even worse than my relatives at getting out of the American big business era the luxuries and the prestige which I should unquestionably very much have enjoyed. Here is where I end by living—among the worst instead of the best of this society—the sordid and unhealthy children of my sordid and unhealthy neighbors, who howl outside my windows night and day. It is this, in the last analysis—there is no doubt about it now!—which has been rankling and causing my gloom: to have left that early world behind, yet never to have made myself comfortable in what was till yesterday the new.

IX. The Second Battle of Oriskany

ONLY a few days after I got back to New York, I read in the papers that there was a milk strike going on in the region from which I had just come. I had been there so short a time and had been so much preoccupied with the past that I knew nothing of what was happening to the farmers; and I went back up to find out.

I attended a strikers' meeting at the invitation of a farmer who lives near us and was at first mistaken for a stool pigeon in the pay of the dairy interests. They were on the point of putting me out when the man who knew me intervened.

I had read in the New York City papers about the ruffianly bands of marauders, not natives nor even farmers and, according to Hamilton Fish, under the leadership of Communist agitators, who were prowling about the country dumping milk, poisoning wells and destroying property. What I found were simply the Lewis County farmers whom I had known all my life and who, though they certainly railed against "the capitalists," were indignant at being called Communists.

They were, however, extremely aroused. I have never seen such furious feeling in any industrial strike. The industrial workers of the towns are used to having their standards of living forced down and then, when they try to rebel, having the police called out against them. They have evolved their organization and their strategy; they are not surprised by bullets or clubs. But the farmers of upstate New York have never been clubbed before.

They struck before, in 1920, but there was no violence and they won their demands. Lately, their condition has become unbearable. With debts and mortgaged farms, they have been

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dragging on year after year, unable to produce a profit and compelled to live on their savings. They have recently been made angry, rightly or wrongly, by having their herds condemned and taken away from them, as the result of tuberculosis tests. They now find themselves getting less for their milk than the upkeep of their cows costs them.

They had hoped for relief from the Pitcher Bill, framed by a man from upstate; but they say that by the time it was passed, the Legislature, under the influence of the distributors, had rendered it ineffective. A milk board, to be sure, was set up; but it lost its prestige because the farmers believed it to be dominated by the distributors. It immediately rejected the farmers' demand for a minimum price for milk at the farm and fixed, instead, a price at the milk stations for cream and fluid milk only—the "surplus," that is to say, the milk in excess of the fluid demand, to be paid for at lower prices. This surplus is about half the farmer's output. It is made into butter, cheese, powdered milk and ice cream. The farmers claim that they have been swindled on this surplus—that they have no means of checking up on how much milk the distributors actually sell as fluid and how much they put into the secondary products. They believe that the distributors make a practice of paying them for their milk at the lower prices and selling it to the consumer at the higher, and that the classification of the different kinds of milk destined for different purposes has intentionally been made very complicated so that the farmers cannot find out what has been done. The milk board had announced that it was depending on the inspectors and on the force of public opinion to keep the milk companies from cheating the farmers—to see that when the price to the consumer was raised, the farmer got his share of the increase. But the price to the consumer went up, and the farmer was as poor as ever.

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The inspectors having apparently failed, it was time for public opinion. The drought this summer, which has burned the pastures brown, came as a last straw. The farmers' savings had all been used up; there were families who were already starving. A meeting was called at Utica, and representatives of some 50,000 farmers voted to strike on the morning of August 1, ceasing to deliver their milk to the dealers. They demanded for the farmer forty-five cents on the consumer's dollar.

The strike was put into effect, and the farmers not only kept their milk at home but picketed the plants and dumped the milk of farmers who tried to deliver. Oneida County was at the core of the strike, and the farmers in the neighborhood of the little city of Boonville had been among the most active. The authorities apparently decided to make an example of Boonville, and state troopers were sent there Monday night. About 10:30 on Tuesday morning, a crowd of some three hundred farmers and spectators gathered along the road outside the town, waiting for a truck headed for Sheffield's. They had a long board with spikes ready to lay across the road. The troopers came out in their cars and marched down between the lines of the crowd, who, never having done any picketing before, did not hesitate to make fun of the troopers. The troopers, encountering this insubordinate spirit, marched back again to their cars and, to the continued amusement of the crowd, proceeded to put on gas masks and steel helmets and to arm themselves with sub-machine-guns, gas bombs and riot sticks. The people had never seen sub-machine-guns and didn't know what to call them. The troopers have asserted since that they ordered the pickets to disperse, that no movement was made to obey, and that somebody threw a stone; but it was impossible to find among the Boonville people anyone who would corroborate this. At any rate, the troopers assaulted the crowd, shooting gas bombs at them and clubbing them: men and women, old and young, alike.

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They pursued people into fields and woodsheds, rushed up and beat them over the heads when they got stuck in the barbed-wire fence. I saw many broken heads and bruises. There was one man who had had a gas bomb fired point-blank into his back, injuring him severely and setting his clothes afire. The troopers yelled at the farmers that they were sons-of-bitches, Reds, rats; the people thought they must be drunk. That the crowd was unarmed on this occasion is proved by the fact that they ran away and that the troopers were not hurt.

I have never before seen a whole community so shaken by horror and anger. Nothing like this had ever happened to them, and the result was precisely the opposite of what the authorities had contemplated. "They thought they'd teach 'em a lesson," someone said, "but they only made 'em fierce!" Four days after the Boonville incident, the troopers were escorting another milk truck near the town of Oriskany. They were led by their commander, a Captain McGrath, who was asserted by the Boonville people to have been present at the previous attack, but who denied this, declaring, when questioned, that he did not know who had led the state troopers that day. This time the farmer-pickets were prepared for them: they had ax-helves, pick-handles and stones. Though they came away with many wounds of their own, they stoned the troopers so effectively that five of them had to be taken to the hospital, including Captain McGrath. Captain McGrath had been the officer in command in putting down the prison revolt at Auburn; and one of the sayings of the farmers got to be: "This is no prison revolt!" Oriskany had already been made famous by a battle between the revolutionary army and the Tories and the Indians in 1777, and people got to referring to the encounter with the troopers as the "Battle of Oriskany." A correspondent in *The Rome Sentinel* was talking about Lexington and Concord.

In this region, unlike some of the Western communities, there

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is no split between the country and the town. The merchants, dependent on the farmers' trade, are 100 percent with the strikers. Here is a protest to Governor Lehman signed by a "Committee of Boonville Business Men": "We, the business and professional men of Boonville, having witnessed the medieval atrocities perpetrated today by your brutal state troopers against the best citizenry of America, do protest and demand that you take immediate steps to remove these brutes from our midst and rectify a condition that should never have existed in connection with the milk holiday." The Kiwanis signed a similar protest. It was strange to find the local paper, *The Boonville Herald and Adirondack Tourist*, which, with its idyllic immemorial cut of a stag's head, a rifle and a creel, has never in all the years I have known it, chronicled anything but the most pastoral happenings, coming out with denunciations of "half-crazed thugs" and "Cossacks," and bulletins on local battles.

The editor and other prominent citizens, unable to believe that the brutality of the troopers could be known to or backed by the authorities, went down to Albany themselves and appealed to the Governor for an inquiry. The Governor sent Major Warner, the chief of the state police. Major Warner, they told me, arrived in town without allowing his presence to be known, entered the hotel by the back door—there was a crowd standing around the front door—and interviewed his own troopers. When the citizens insisted on his seeing one of the men who had been beaten up the day of the battle, he listened to what the man had to say and then grimly replied that if they hadn't enough troopers he would send them forty or fifty more—which he did. He also appointed to conduct an investigation the same Captain McGrath who had asserted that he didn't know who had led the charge at Boonville and who had afterwards been sent to the hospital by the rocks of Oriskany Falls. The citizens demanded of the Governor that Major

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Warner be suspended from his office and that some person not actually injured in the battle be appointed to conduct the inquiry. The bitterness was increased when it was announced that not only would Captain McGrath conduct the inquiry but that he would conduct it behind closed doors without admitting even the New York press, instead of, as had been said at first, in public.

In the meantime, the situation between the state troopers and the farmers had been getting more and more tense. The farmers went on picketing and dumping. I saw one man who had been up five nights at a plant where the troopers had just scalded the pickets with a hose of boiling hot water, and who was literally foaming at the mouth—the first time I have ever seen this phenomenon. One old man who had been chased by the troopers took his stand on the railroad track and shouted that he owned stock in the railroad and that the troopers couldn't touch him on his own property. The farmers ambushed the big milk tanks that were being sent down from the north and punctured them with rifle balls, and they fired on the cans in the milk-trains. They put kerosene in the milk and dynamited the milk-houses of farmers who refused to join the "holiday"; and in the case of one fancy farmer who owned a herd of prize cattle and who by reason of his attempts to discourage the strike was suspected of being in the pay of the enemy, they drove his cattle away and, according to rumor, cut their tails off.

This last was a great joke at the strikers' meetings, which took place out in the open every afternoon. Their leaders would speak from a truck. It was not in the least like an industrial strike: there were no trained speakers and no one from the outside. There was a more desperate rage underneath and a more jocular and easy-going surface. No gaze can look so fierce as the clear and steady eye of a farmer. I remember the fixed warlike grin of one boy who was trying to salvage his truck, used in

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picketing the night before: the troopers had smashed the windshield, broken the steering wheel and systematically put out of commission all the important parts inside. The troopers had gotten the best of it because they had had guns where the farmers had only clubs. The women churned their milk into butter with electric washing-machines and sometimes took part in the battles with such weapons as pop bottles and bricks.

The Governor, reluctant to call out the militia—which would certainly have been a signal for civil war—instructed the sheriffs to appoint deputies. But the sheriff of Oneida County pointed out that in an attempt to eliminate jobs, it had been provided that the sheriff in that county should pay deputies out of his own pocket. The Ways and Means Committee of the Board of Supervisors refused to appropriate funds for this purpose. “I wonder,” said one of them, “what the farmers would say if we spent the money they pay in taxes for deputies to fight them.” It had made the farmers particularly indignant to reflect that the troopers, maintained by their own money, were really “the farmers’ hired men.” Governor Lehman had to make haste to get a bill through the New York State Legislature providing funds to obtain deputies in Oneida County.

The Governor made an attempt also to get the Legislature to investigate the Milk Board; but the Republicans passed the buck back to him and told him to deal with the matter himself. Then the rotogravure supplement of the Sunday papers published a picture of the Governor calling on the President at Hyde Park—Roosevelt looking up at the camera with his usual alert affability and Lehman bending forward toward the President in an attitude of flattered acquiescence. And though the Governor refused to treat with the farmers till the strike had been definitely called off, some kind of assurances were evidently received, for the strike leaders finally gave the signal for the dairymen to begin delivering milk again.

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Yet I came away gloomy from the milk strike. Governor Lehman is supposed to own stock in Borden's; and the chimerical smile of Roosevelt hovers very far away on the horizon. And what the farmers are immediately confronted with is the countenance of Captain McGrath—that ominous phenomenon, the military policeman, who has come to figure so prominently since the War—sitting down behind closed doors, in the midst of their own community, to pass judgment on his underlings and himself.

X. Saving the Right People and Their Butlers

CHRIST, the speaker tells us, has come to the Akron, Ohio, tire factories: You've heard about the non-skid tires they make out there. Well, now they're making non-skid lives! And the salmon fisheries in British Columbia. There had been a strike called up there which would have stopped work in the whole salmon-fishing industry in British Columbia. But the boss got together with the radical leader and he shared Christ with him, and the strike was called off. And again, in the Ford hospital in Dearborn, the doctor there shares Christ with the Ford workers that come to him as patients. And so labor and capital get together and they co-operate in the spirit of God, and that's the only way they *can* get together!

The speaker is one of those colorless, amorphous, outlineless, expressionless Americans who seem never to have grown up and never to have acquired a personality. He is probably a man of middle age. All the front part of his head is smooth of hair, but his face is as blank as a baby's. He is wearing a dinner jacket

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with a remarkably wide bowtie which stretches from lapel to lapel.

This lusterless figure is framed in an immense and splendid setting: the ballroom of the Plaza Hotel. All is diamond, cream and gold. There are gold moldings and gold-trimmed Ionic columns, medallions of dainty cupids outlined on apple-green backgrounds, and big dazzling chandeliers made of tiny bulbs in solid clusters as dense as incandescent chain-mail. And all around are red-curtained boxes so spacious that each seems a small proscenium, each lighted by a lesser chandelier which dangles like a bright diamond pendant. In the boxes, there are ladies in evening gowns, very unprovocative evening gowns, and gentlemen in dinner jackets with white handkerchiefs sticking out of their pockets.

It is a meeting of the First Century Christian Fellowship, otherwise known as the Oxford Group—the evangelical movement led by Frank Buchman and formerly called Buchmanism. The occasion is a preliminary rally preparatory to Buchman's arrival in New York.

But the rather yeastless man who has just been speaking and who believes that Christ has come to the salmon fisheries has a more positive force behind him. A rotund and fleshy chairman in bone spectacles, evidently one of Buchman's lieutenants, picks up the high pressure of the meeting with an emphatic voice and hearty Southern accent. "What you've just heard," he declares, "is news, not views! Events, not theories! We do a lot of talking about what *might* happen—well, what you've just heard about is what *has* happened!"

The next speakers are a middle-aged lady in black, gentle-voiced, touchingly sincere, and with little of the exhibitionism of the convert, who tells how going to church had ceased really to mean anything to her and how the Oxford Group had finally awakened her to the truths of religion again; and a long, blond

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boy, who has the innocently smirking self-consciousness of a freshman who has just made the glee club. He had gone to a church school, says the blond boy, and so he ought to have learned better, but he had thought only of having a good time and had failed to consider other people. The result was that he became "a periodical drunkard." He had tried being psychoanalyzed and that had lasted about two weeks; then he had tried religion, but it wasn't presented to him in the right way. Finally, he had found friends in the Oxford Group who were willing to lay down their lives with him, who wanted to share with him and help him. "And they certainly have!" he ends rather abruptly, and sits down and goes on innocently smirking through most of the rest of the meeting. A second college boy announces that he went to prep at Hotchkiss, "which is a very good school," and afterwards to Princeton, "which is usually considered a pretty good college." At college, he had "learned to behave like a gentleman" and he had "broadened his intellectual horizon," but he had never had any direction. It was the Oxford Group that had given him a direction. At school he had always been afraid that people would think he was queer because he came from China, but the Oxford Group had brought him such true happiness as he had not believed possible.

The chairman gets up and demands whether these big social movements—these big social movements that spread so wide!—aren't the result of first one person being changed and then changing other people.

So far, I am a little disappointed. I seem to be back in a prep school Y.M.C.A. meeting. I had expected something more sensational. Some years ago, I remember, Frank Buchman became so objectionable to the authorities at Princeton that they forbade him to come on the campus, and since then I have heard colorful reports of the movement's triumphal progress. I have observed during the last few years in the industrial Middle

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Western cities that the success of the tours of the Oxford Group among the propertied class seems to have been proceeding at equal pace with the increasing acuteness of the industrial crisis. I have heard about the Buchmanite houseparties which begin with an atmosphere of well-bred cheerfulness and white handkerchiefs sticking out of dinner jackets, and end with sin-spilling and hysterics. And I am let down by these infantile jokes, these woolly prep school opinions, this audience of giggling and better-class-dressed and half-baked-looking people. It is not even up to an A. F. of L. meeting or a Rotary Club dinner. The faiths of the respectable churches must be burning low indeed if this is the hottest their firebrands have to offer.

The chairman himself, I will admit, compares favorably with any Rotary Club pep-talker or professional A. F. of L. orator. He has mastered a technique very similar to theirs, and the similarity of his ideas is surprising. "Some people," he remarks with sarcasm, "will tell you that religion is something so *private*, so *personal*, that you can't speak about it to other people! Well, the Communists don't feel that way! *They* don't hesitate to speak out! *They* let people know about what they think! And if we don't want the Communists and the radicals to get control of the whole world, we'll have to speak out, too!"

But as I look at this chairman and hear him, a gradual realization astounds me. The chairman is an old friend of mine, whom I have not seen for many years. I knew that he was one of Buchman's disciples, and I had wondered whether I should find him here. I had fancied I had had a glimpse of him as I came in, standing up with his back turned toward me—the tall, stooped, ungainly, earnest youth whom I had known and liked at college. He was already headed then for the Episcopal Church, he was the only man I knew at that time who had an unmistakable religious vocation. We used to call him "The Bishop" and predict for him a sybaritic future of fine chasubles

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and gossipy tea-drinking in a well-to-do parish. Well, our friend has certainly fooled us, though I always recognized something serious in him, something too serious for the typical snobbish rector. It was this, as well as a genuine appreciation of cathedrals and classical music, which used to make him interesting to me. And, once I have recognized him now, I can see the seriousness in him still, totally metamorphosed though he seems; and my old liking for him causes me to follow the further developments of the meeting with a certain sympathetic interest which I haven't felt up to now.

A new speaker does something to make intelligible the transformation which my friend has undergone. He is a nice, funny, little Episcopal clergyman, the rector of a church on Long Island—with a round, pink, bald, boyish head so shiny that it might be buttered, and his silver cross dangling distinctly against the black expanse of his waistcoat—who stands as if on tiptoe with his arms held out from his sides, like the Bishop of Rum-Ti-Foo in the "Bab Ballads." This buoyant little rector tells us that he had preached sermons for many years and that he had never been able to see that they had any effect on people. He preached a sermon one Sunday on the commandment "Thou shalt not commit adultery," and a man came up to him afterwards and said, "That was a magnificent sermon!" And then, just a few months later, that same man ran away with somebody's wife. Then the rector's own wife had come home one day and told him that she had been talking to the Oxford Group and that, for the first time in her life, they had made religion seem real to her. He had been a little taken aback to realize that, living with him all these years, she had never been able to take religion seriously. So he had looked into the Oxford movement, and the effect on his sermons had been electric. One of his parishioners had come to him one Sunday and asked him, "What did you say in your sermon this morning? Alice came back all

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upset. She's been crying ever since." Another of his congregation complained that she didn't know what had gotten into him, he had used to preach decent, sensible, reasonable sermons, and now he preached like a Methodist!

Well, suppose, the outsider puts it to himself, you found yourself an Episcopal clergyman these days: would you be content with the duties of your parish, such beneficences as you happen to find occasion for through the offices and forms of the Church, such dignity as is possible to enjoy in the backing of an ancient and distinguished tradition? Suppose you were not ambitious in Bishop Manning's way—suppose you really wanted to reach people's souls? Suppose you wanted to arouse people to the realities which the conventional world always keeps covered? You could hardly succeed in doing this through the regular machinery of the Episcopal Church or of any of the other churches; they are none of them alive enough. The only kind of religion which is alive among us—leaving the Catholic Church out of account—is the outlawed religion of the evangelists, of the Aimee McPhersons and the Buchmans. And, given the vocation of saving souls, I should certainly agree with my old friend that all the cathedrals and Bach in the world could not make up for the deadness of the churches—which will produce no more Bach and no more real cathedrals.

But as the proceedings of the evening go on, my sympathies become terribly dampened.

Somebody, the chairman tells us, asked him lately whether there was anybody in the group who wasn't rich; and a slight titter is heard from the assembly, which seems to me a little self-conscious. It is a fact that the leaders of the Oxford Group have always frankly gone out for the "socially prominent," the theory being that, for purposes of conversion, these are inevitably the key men and women in a college or other community. The soul of a boy in the best club, of a lady who lives

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in the East Eighties, is particularly pleasing to God, because He knows that their example will be followed by the members of more humble clubs, the dwellers at less splendid addresses. The ballroom and the dinner jackets of the Oxford Group really belong to the realm of class advertising, with the pictures of ritzy social leaders that are used as lures for onion soup and mentholated cigarettes. And so does calling it the Oxford Group instead of, as formerly, Buchmanism, though it has no official connection whatever with Oxford. The "Oxford," with its suggestion of Old-World correctitude, takes off the curse of vulgar evangelism, and the happy invention, "First Century Christian Fellowship," disarms any imputation of snobbishness which may be roused by the idea of Oxford.

But the chairman wants to emphasize this last aspect; and, after pointing out the importance of kindness to servants, he produces a reformed butler. This butler, says the chairman, was down and out, and then he came to work at Calvary Mission, and then they got him a job with a lady who was a member of the Oxford Group, and he would tell you now all that it had meant to him to work for a family who had been changed.

The butler is a bald little Irishman, who explains that he had led for many years a life of drunkenness and sin. Drink had been his god; he had rolled in the gutter drunk, and once he had lain in a speakeasy for five days and five nights without ever changing his clothes. He had been in the alcoholic ward at Bellevue Hospital five times with delirium tremens, once for six weeks at a stretch. When he had first taken the job with the B—s, he had had to mix cocktails for them and he hadn't been sure at first whether he could stand it, but he had held up and now he has the keys to the cellar—and, he adds, with obvious pride, "Mrs. B— has quite a cellar!" The other night, when the nurse had been out, he had been asked to go up and stay with the little daughter. She was kneeling down and saying

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her prayers, and this is what he had heard her beg: "God bless my Mummy and God help my Mummy to win my Daddy to Christ!"

The members of the First Century Christian Fellowship are vaguely troubled by the events of the twentieth. The world crisis is always present as a remote but uncomfortable background which persists in making itself felt even after one has succeeded in easing one's own internal discontent. One lady points out that "Europe seems to be on the verge of chaos" and that "it seems as if we might not be far behind." She has thought about it a little more seriously than the others; and, in general, the women of the Oxford Group seem more serious and genuine than the men. They tell how they have tried social work, charities, acting, teaching, raising money for cathedrals, and how none of these activities was satisfactory.

The effect on the businessmen is curious. One young man from a well-known rubber company tells how people had warned him that you couldn't mix religion with business, but they had tried mixing everything else with business, and look at business now! He himself had had a hard time to bring himself to go to all the customers he had deceived and confess to them how they had been cheated, but he had done it and, instead of their resenting it, he had found that it had brought them closer together.

The concluding exhibit of the evening is a couple from Great Neck, Long Island. The wife appears first and explains that she had been married to an intellectual and unable to share his interests, and that this had made her very unhappy till she had discovered the Oxford Group. Then the husband appears—a white-faced man in glasses, with a round forehead which dwarfs his chin—and turns out to be simply an advertising man who has just written a book. He had protested, when he first talked with the Oxford Group, that you couldn't be honest in

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the advertising business, and they had replied that you could if you'd take the loss. So he had tried, he had tried to be the three things which the Oxford Group said you ought to be: *pure, unselfish, and loving*. It was hard enough, he found, to be pure. In his advertising copy in the past he had depended a good deal on suggestiveness, on the sensual appeal; for example, in response to his advertisements for a perfume which he had named after a famous prima donna, he had frequently received letters from young girls inquiring whether it would really bring back their lost lovers. And he had had to cut all that out. And it was hard to be unselfish, to sacrifice advertising contracts because you couldn't conscientiously do the work. But the hardest thing of all was to be loving. He had always formerly hated his competitors, especially when they were successful at his expense, and he now found it very difficult to love them. But he had succeeded, and now when anybody beat him out, his attitude toward them remained loving: instead of cursing them, he would wish them good luck, hope that their lives might be successful and happy. Then he had been able to be much nicer with his family at the time when he had been working on his book; he had ceased to be so cross at the dinner table. And finally he had put the book "under guidance," had "asked God to write it for him." The chairman stands up with a copy of the book and announces its impending publication.

The whole occasion leaves with me an impression infinitely sad and insipid. I have seen these people before: these people whom their work does not satisfy, these people who are coming to realize that their rôles in society are not serious and to seek anxiously for something to hang on to which will give them an anchor outside it all. If they were a little more definitely neurotic, they would be going to psychoanalysts; if they were sillier, they would be nudists; if they were cleverer, Gurd-

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jeff would get them. But the houseparties, the butlers and the ballrooms of the First Century Christian Fellowship suit this particular group exactly. It has been the triumph of Buchman and his associates to put patent-leather shoes on the Christ of the missions and get him into a dinner jacket, and to give him for Mary Magdalene a refined Anglo-Saxon lady, chastely but expensively gowned. And they have invested him with the fatuous cheerlessness of the people in American advertisements and of the salesmen who try to sell you the things they advertise. One of the characteristic features of the Oxford Group is the continual chuckling, bubbling, and beaming which is always going on among its members, and which makes an outsider feel quite morose.

It is ominously symptomatic of the condition of the owning classes that it should be possible to sell them at this time the old shouting and confession-compelling God of the camp meeting and Salvation Army shelter. There are some Salvation Army people in the audience, watching no doubt with a professional eye. Are they envious of Buchman as they realize that nowadays it is not only the poor who need to be reconciled to their lot?

XI. What to Do Till the Doctor Comes

From the Diary of a Drinker-Out

IT was good to be clear-headed again: the night before now seemed inconceivable. There the three of us had sat getting tight and raking up that old three-cornered disgrace, in the

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Oyster Bar of the Grand Central. Now my mind seemed as limpid and perfect as the big round biological cell in the center of the Diego Rivera mural which the Rockefellers so stupidly destroyed.

I could summon the address with distinguished ease, and I could even remember the names of the people who had asked me. I had decided not to drink; and it would be interesting to find out more about them—not to drink, and then to see Sally, and to drink only a little even then. I noticed a little marble cupid choking a dolphin in the entry, and it looked as if it might have been something which I should have seen if I had gone to Italy this spring.

My nerves, however, shied a little as I broke into the hubbub of the party. I hadn't run into Arthur Fern for years, and I am always glad to see him. I wondered why I never look him up. He seemed clammy and a little ascetic as if he had been reading André Gide—as I am afraid he probably had. He told me that he was on the wagon and that he was afraid he shouldn't enjoy the party; and we shook hands on it and swore to stand by one another. Joe Peranza came up: I was glad to see him—he has always been my favorite press agent. He was very funny about the shows—though I think there might have been the makings of a really good theatrical season if only the plays had been decent and there had been somebody to take a real interest in putting them on. We had one of their purple cocktails. I was glad to see Elsie Flinders, though she is certainly not physically attractive; and we all began laughing like hyenas.

There is a girl I always see at these parties, and I never know who she is, but this time it turned out she was married to Joe. I always forget she is capable of being funny, so always have long dragging conversations with her, and then when she begins to be funny, it is too late because someone else

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comes up. This time, thanks to my sobriety, I remembered and immediately got her started making cracks about the other guests. The second set of cocktails carried us high. She told me that she and Joe had gotten horribly on each other's nerves. At first, they had worked together, returning each other's nifties; but then she found she couldn't help scoring off him in a way he couldn't cope with and resented, and now they worked against one another. It is true, I suppose, that Joe is essentially a wit of the nineties—a more debased form of that.

There is a princess who is always at these parties, and it is a part of her act to talk about art, and it is hard to do anything about it. Luckily, Lou Flagg and her husband came out of the cactus collection. Lou is really nice in her loud loose way, though no longer particularly attractive. She and Will are one couple at any rate who seem to be satisfactorily married. They really give each other something: what she lacks in delicacy and taste he makes up by those overelaborate dinners, and his deficiency in human feeling she compensates for by her hearty howl. An advanced round of cocktails reached us. Arthur Fern and I explained we were on the wagon. The purple was wearing thin and the alcohol base so much in evidence that it made them rather hard to get down.

I remembered that I had to get back for dinner with Sally. It was just that exhilarating moment of the second real evening of a love affair when neither knows the other very well and you are so eager to find out more about each other. I looked forward to her slightly slanting eyes, which seemed to me to compare very favorably with anything I could see at the party. I finally identified the little hostess, who seemed to be more or less of a guest, as other taller people lived in the apartment.

When I got home I found a phone message from Sally saying she couldn't come, so I went back to the party again to see if I could get somebody for dinner.

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I met Lou coming down the stairs. She said that Will had already left and that she had nothing to do for dinner. In the cab, we fell into each other's arms. We conjured up quite a convincing little passion on the strength of the way she used to wear one of those big hats in the summer of 1926, her respect for my intellectual integrity and my former interest in her younger sister. We talked about what had happened to Al Jolson and thought we should prefer the Hopi snake dance, which neither of us had ever seen. The night traffic and neon lights were beginning to seem exciting, and we hoped that we might be able to think later that there was a movie or something we'd like to see. We went to the Brangwyn Grill.

There we found Rollo Furstman and Phil Beatty. It was jolly to hear Rollo's stories through those big thick "Old-Fashioned" tumblers with pieces of yellow and red fruit salad in them. The only trouble about him is that if you attempt to tell him a story yourself, he is likely to burst out laughing and say "Marvelous!" when you are still only halfway through, and promptly start another story of his own.

We went around afterwards to Phil's apartment, and there we found a big burly fattish fellow with a kind of brown Victorian beard, and a little school-teacherlike woman who seemed bright enough behind her eye-glasses and who was putting down drinks as unobtrusively as if she had been crocheting. The man had a burly *blagueur* line which seemed slightly to throw Phil off—Phil's manners are old-fashioned and ceremonious.

It turned out that the man was a great hunter. He had had the idea of going to Komodo after the man-eating dinosaur-lizards long before Douglas Burden, but Burden had beaten him to it and bungled it; and he told us that nobody really knew how far down in the water Will Beebe went, as a confederate kept track of the cable. He said that leopards and tigers were nothing, and that rhinoceroses, though tricky, were yellow.

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And he told about fighting an ounce, which he says is the gamest animal there is.

The ounce came out of the corner just behind Phil's big victrola and slunk along the top of the bookcase past a series of Lachaises the size of meteors—they are all right, but you can have too many of them. Then it sprang and knocked over the cognac, breaking several glasses. Phil Beatty with his incomparable ease and grace, paid no attention to it and wouldn't let anybody even pick up the bottle, which luckily had the cork in it. The man with the beard dodged quickly aside, and the animal landed on the carpet only about three feet away from him. Before he could shoot, it sprang again, and he had to stave it off with his gun-barrel. The doorbell rang, and a little man came in who looked as if he had been boiled to make him softer—he was an intelligent and well-read accountant, whose job, he said, was falsifying systematically the balance-sheets of big corporations. He explained the Communist line and pointed out the danger of deviating from it. It was pleasant to watch the urbanity with which Phil, who is a consummate Tory himself and even favors the restoration of monarchy, listened with perfect attention, refrained from engaging in argument and hardly even put forward his own views. Lou said that what she had against the Communists was that they wanted to do away with pure beauty and pour Mozart's symphonies down the drain. The accountant replied that, though he personally would be sorry, this was something which might have to be done.

A young Englishman came in with Arthur Fern. He said he was going back to Persia, because Persia was old, quiet and corrupt. He couldn't go back to Oxford because people like Spender and Auden would have made the place impossible for him. He liked Cambridge, Mass., better, because there wasn't so much ferment going on there. But Persia was really the best of all. He thought that the whole course of Western civiliza-

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tion had received a really decisive setback when the Greeks had kept the Persians out.

We decided to go over to Baracci's, where I found Sally having dinner with Jake. She got up and came over and explained to me that Jake had had one of his nervous retching spells and that she hadn't wanted to leave.

They kept serving us rounds of champagne cocktails, which we drank but which nobody wanted. The man with the beard got back to his hunting: it seems that an ounce is the same thing as a lynx. I asked the woman with the school-teacher's glasses, who was evidently the hunter's wife, if she knew a lot about animals, too. She replied that the only wild animal she had known was a sick chipmunk she had once had at Westport. The man with the beard, overhearing her, stopped short in the middle of his story and looked as if he were going to burst into tears. "So I'm a sick chipmunk!" he said sourly. "Not you," said the woman. "A real chipmunk—I had one in Westport years ago." "I should say," put in Phil with his usual tact, though not understanding the conversation, "that in comparison with many at Westport, Jack presents a perfect specimen of *mens sana in corpore sano*." "I guess Gauguin wasn't neurotic!" said the hunter, getting up and glaring at Phil. "I didn't say you were neurotic, my dear fellow," said Phil. "Don't dear-fellow me, you damned art-taster! you damned phonograph-record gloater!" said the hunter, getting burly again. "All right!" shouted Phil unexpectedly in a coarse and raucous voice. "If you want to fight an ounce, here's a hundred and ninety pounds!" and he suddenly leapt upon the man with the beard and knocked him over backwards. The proprietor rushed in and picked them up. Rollo Furstman made Phil go home; and the woman with the glasses took Jack away. Arthur Fern told me afterwards that he had known her at Westport, too, and that he had

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thought at first she meant him. I had to pay most of the check for the cocktails, which apparently nobody had ordered.

The little soft-boiled accountant insisted on having Lou and me come up to his apartment in the Guilford, promising us magnificent entertainment. While he was out getting liquor, Lou and I had half an hour there together among the bogus Americana and the Buddhas. I was impressed by the size and beauty of her breasts, which her stringy neck and awkward figure had given me no idea of. We agreed that we had been nice together when we had been talking about our past in the cab. I struck a false and idiotic note by remembering and repeating Swinburne's line: "If ever I leave off to honor thee, I were the worst churl born!"

When our host at last came back, he had beer in pasteboard containers—he said it was all he could get at that hour. He called up a great many people but couldn't induce anybody to come. Lou suggested that we might ask some of our friends, and we succeeded in getting Laura Frink and Fanny Murdock's brother, whom we had never seen before but who had answered the phone at Fanny's. In the meantime, before they got there, two tough little numbers of the accountant's turned up—one a platinum blonde, with the eyebrows she had plucked showing through; the other tight and pretending a foreign accent. Lou had forgotten, she told me afterwards, how drunken and *déclassée* Laura Frink always made her feel—she said that Laura didn't drink herself, but was always encouraging other people to drink so that she could enjoy herself after she got home with that smug little broker she was married to, over how everybody was going to pieces. The accountant's two fallen girl-friends were a regular godsend to Laura: they enabled her to get snootier and snootier in a nicer and nicer way. It turned out that Fanny Murdock's brother was a young mining engineer who believed in getting oil out of shale. The girl with the

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phony accent evidently wanted to take him home, but he only wanted to talk to her about shale. Lou finally came back at Laura and told her that virtue was making her haggard and that the brokers would soon be wiped out; Laura retaliated by intimating that all of us people had been wiped out already. Fanny Murdock's brother insisted that we oughtn't to be discouraged, on account of the vast possibilities of shale.

Phil Beatty now reappeared, walking stiffly and speaking remotely, like one who has risen from the dead. He said that he had gone to sleep and then waked up feeling terribly. Lou told him that his dual personality made Jekyll and Hyde look like a sister act; and he started off—the raconteur again, but now rather self-justificatory and prolix—on a long story about his relations with the bearded man, which went back to the time when they had been at school together and Jack had put dead birds in Phil's bed.

What sounded like the voice of another tart called the accountant up on the phone; and Laura left with offensive sobriety, and Lou and I decided to go. In the taxi, we swore that in the future we must see each other very often. There was a sudden shattering crash, and great glass splinters fell out of the window. We saw a group of men milling around and somebody stopped the cab. It was the taxi strike. They made us get out. Lou gave them a piece of her mind, and we found another cab around the corner.

We were running down and rather glum, so we went into a little downtown bar that had funny blue lights in the windows. Lou told me that Will had a mistress and that he hadn't lived at home for four years, and that the mistress had been a friend of the children's nurse, and that she didn't think he even liked the mistress, and that every time he decided to commit suicide she had to go and quiet him down, and that the children had gotten to loathe him, and that she was getting cross with the

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children, and that she had never taken a lover because the only man she liked was in Seattle. She wept in the most horrible way.

After I left her, I called up Sally, and she said that Jake was there and still retching, that I could hear him over the phone. Then I called up Rollo Furstman, and by some diabolical chance Alys Ludovici was there, so I said I couldn't go around, but had to talk to her and promise to see her, and it brought up that whole horrible affair.

And the most damnable thing of all was that when I got home and was going to bed, I broke both my watch and my glasses.

XII. Miss Barrows and Doctor Wirt

MISS ALICE BARROWS and Doctor William A. Wirt had for twenty years been friends and allies in the field of advanced education.

Doctor Wirt is the inventor of the school system which he prefers to have called the work-study-play plan, but which is more commonly known as the Gary system. After experimenting with it first in 1902 in his native town of Bluffton, Indiana, he went on as school superintendent to Gary. Gary was then simply a tract of land which had recently been bought by the Steel Corporation and named after its honored chairman, and where there were only three hundred people.

Doctor Wirt had been inspired and influenced by John Dewey and William Morris. He wanted schools where the children would have a chance at an all-around cultural development and

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where they would be free to cultivate special aptitudes. He was opposed to routine teaching, to regimentation, and to the kind of vocational training in which Henry Ford has taken such an interest and which is designed to break in young people to factory work before they have left their schoolhouses, so that they may make an easy transition to the factories. He thus found himself in opposition to the policies of the United States Steel Corporation, which believed that the children of workers should not be allowed to learn too much, that, in fact, the non-tendentious rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic were about all they could be safely trusted with. When Doctor Wirt was trying to get a plot of land to put up a new kind of school building which would enable him to carry out his ideas, the steel company refused to sell it to him, and one day he found that his plans had mysteriously disappeared from his files.

But Doctor Wirt's work-study-play system had the advantage from the point of view of economy and efficiency that, applying the balanced-load principle of industry to schools, it increased their capacity 33 percent. And Doctor Wirt was at that time a young, strong-minded, strong-willed, and dynamic man possessed by a compelling vision of education. He got his fine new schoolhouse in Gary and he gave the children such excellent training that a remarkably large number went on to college. The music teaching was particularly good, and a number of the graduates distinguished themselves musically. The steel people, who by 1918 were in rather bad odor with the public and who were uneasy over the discontent of their workers, began to take an interest and a pride in Doctor Wirt's educational gift to Gary. Doctor Wirt had provided for the children even tennis-courts, gardens and ponies.

And the Gary system spread through the country. By 1933 it had been adopted by schools in five hundred cities, the number having doubled during the three preceding years. Miss Bar-

Miss Barrows and Doctor Wirt

rows, who was an educational specialist, became interested in the work-study-play plan and in 1917, when Doctor Wirt came to New York to install it there under the auspices of the Mitchel administration, Miss Barrows worked with him as his secretary. They had little in common in their political views: Doctor Wirt was an old-fashioned individualist and Miss Barrows believed in a planned economy. But they both believed in the work-study-play plan, and in the field of education they were both radicals, so that they did not find it necessary to debate politics and the social-economic system. In New York they had to fight together the corrupt officials and the conservative educators. When Tammany finally won out and Doctor Wirt went back to Gary, he and Miss Barrows remained close friends: Miss Barrows visited Gary every year.

When the depression came, Gary was hit hard: 90 percent of the people were out of work, and the mill superintendent was serving as watchman. Doctor Wirt, whose prime preoccupation for years had been the welfare of the children of Gary, had the crisis before his eyes and on his mind night and day. He arranged to enable them to make themselves clothes through the domestic science department of his school; and he established a record for public schools by giving them breakfast and dinner for four cents a day. And he thought up a scheme to end the depression. The scheme was to send up prices and at the same time to devalue the dollar. He became—at the age of sixty—more or less of a crank on the subject; and he looked with extreme disfavor on many of the policies of the administration. He himself had had to fight for an original idea, and he conceived that he had been given a fair field because he had been able to put it over in Gary. The brain trust administrators, it seemed to him, were trying to dictate to people, to regiment them, to interfere with the free play of forces. And Doctor Wirt became a member of that active organization consecrated to

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American individualism and "alarmed over the dangerous trends in business," called the Committee for the Nation. He made use of the Committee for the Nation to publicize his scheme for devaluing the dollar; and they evidently made use of him.

When Doctor Wirt came on to Washington in connection with the business of the Committee, he would usually look up Miss Barrows, who had for fourteen years now been a school building specialist in the educational office of the Department of the Interior. Last fall Mr. Robert Kohn, the director of the housing division of the PWA, wanted somebody to help with education in connection with the subsistence homesteads. Miss Barrows suggested Doctor Wirt. Doctor Wirt was not very favorably disposed, because subsistence homesteads meant depopulating the cities and without large modern cities you could never get the equipment necessary for work-study-play schools, and besides the whole thing smacked of socialism. But Miss Barrows invited him to dinner to meet some of the liberals in the administration and to try to interest him in the kind of thing they were doing.

There were Miss Hildegard Kneeland, an economist in the Department of Agriculture, appointed during the Coolidge administration; Miss Mary Taylor, the editor of the consumers' guide of the AAA; Mr. Robert Bruère, the director of the NRA Industrial Relations Board of the textile industry; Mr. David C. Coyle, a consulting engineer and a specialist in wind-resistance, a member of the Technical Board of Review of the PWA; and Mr. Laurence Todd, the American representative of the Soviet news agency, Tass. They were all middle-class intellectuals like Doctor Wirt himself, experts in various fields, with, most of them, liberal views.

Doctor Wirt began by talking about education, but soon got off on his money theory and, though Miss Barrows tried from time to time to bring him back to education, went on expound-

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ing it for four solid hours. He reviewed for them the history of currency from the earliest times to the present day and showed how his plan was logically inescapable. The audience began by being impressed but ended by being exhausted. Miss Kneeland, who had been chafing to debate with him, was able to interrupt him only once briefly when he spoke of his desire to bring the country back to the conditions of 1926, by demanding to know why he should want to; but he brushed her aside and swept on. Miss Fleta Springer, who was ill upstairs, testifies to having heard from her bedroom the interminable drone of Doctor Wirt, and to the piteous complaints of the other ladies when they occasionally got away for a moment.

Everybody wondered at Doctor Wirt; Mr. Coyle, after the Doctor's departure, was congratulated on his fortunate equipment as an expert in wind-resistance. Doctor Wirt told Miss Barrows, when he saw her next day, that he was afraid he had talked too much the night before. They continued to see each other and remain friendly.

What happened then, however, was astounding. The president of the Remington-Rand typewriting company read before the Senate committee on the Stock Market Bill some statements made by Doctor Wirt in the course of one of his currency leaflets circulated by the Committee for the Nation. Doctor Wirt had, he claimed, definite evidence that there was a Red plot on foot at Washington: radicals concealed in the administration were planning to shanghai the President and to impose a Communist dictatorship on the country.

The Democrats demanded that these charges be investigated and summoned Doctor Wirt to Washington. A few days before he came, Doctor Wirt wrote Miss Barrows a letter:

"I have hesitated to write you because I did not want to inadvertently mix you up with the present controversy. How-

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ever, since the press notices have come to me concerning the dinner party in Virginia . . . I am quite sure that I will be asked about the dinner at the hearing. . . . In order to remove what may be a serious strain upon you I want to state very definitely and support it with copies of my letters to you concerning my visits, that my relationship with you and everyone in the Department of Education was purely on educational matters . . . I shall state . . . that I asked to see Mr. Coyle because I was interested in discussing with him his argument in a publication concerning the 'present era' of plenty and the necessity of increasing the service-occupations activities. . . . I shall emphasize that so far as Mr. Coyle is concerned, he did not directly or indirectly refer to the general social or economic program of the New Dealers. As to Robert Bruère, I shall make very clear that he was constantly objecting to the diversion of the conversation from the subject of schools. . . . I merely want to advise you of the situation so that you and Doctor Zook and other persons in the Department of Education will understand my attitude. The only thing that I remember about you and government is the statement that you made to me that you were working on schools and leaving saving the country to the other fellow.

"With best wishes, and kindest regards to Doctor Zook, I
am

Cordially yours,

William Wirt."

Miss Barrows, as a matter of fact, had not worried, and continued to remain quite untroubled till she turned on her radio the morning of the hearing and heard Doctor Wirt testifying that Miss Taylor, Miss Kneeland, and Mr. Todd had told him at her dinner in so many words that Franklin Roosevelt was the Kerensky of a revolution for which they would presently find the Stalin; that though the President appeared to be mak-

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ing his own decisions, the truth was that they had him in the middle of a swift stream where it would be impossible now for him to turn back; and that—Miss Kneeland was supposed to have quoted this from Tugwell—the ultimate aim was to abolish private business and to set up a new social order.

Now Miss Kneeland had never met Tugwell nor had she ever read any of his books, nor could anybody at Miss Barrows's dinner remember that anything had been said about Roosevelt, Kerensky, or Stalin. Doctor Wirt had himself introduced into a memorandum which he had prepared for the Senate committee, a number of passages from the speeches and books of Tugwell, and it has been conjectured that he may have gotten Kerensky from the last paragraph of the new book by Ernest Lindley called "The Roosevelt Revolution." Perhaps he had intended to concentrate attention on the published opinions of the brain-trusters and to leave the guests at the dinner out of it. Perhaps he had actually confused in his mind what he had read with what he had heard. But the fact is that under examination he charged the guests at Miss Barrows's dinner with having recited long passages out of Tugwell. And the fact is that he delivered them all straight into the hands of the Republican opposition, already snapping and yapping and only too eager to rag the Reds. Had not Robert Bruère, during the War, defended the I.W.W.? Had not Frederick C. Howe, as Commissioner of Immigration, tried to save anarchists from being deported? At this signal, the reactionary press, which had recently been becoming very restive, burst into full cry. It was the first outbreak against the administration.

Doctor Wirt must have got more than he bargained for. He protested at one point rather pathetically: "I am not a Bourbon. I believe in social reform." It is not necessarily true that Doctor Wirt has been the tool of the Steel Corporation. But, though he has had to fight the steel people for his schools, he

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is at bottom, as it turns out, more completely at one with them than he may in his earlier years have supposed. Doctor Wirt has always been anti-union. He destroyed several years ago the Gary local of the teachers' union. And now, lined up with the other anti-union forces, he finds himself in disconcerting company. One of the chief figures in the Committee for the Nation and apparently the chief guiding spirit behind the recent performance of Doctor Wirt—having, it is said, paid his legal expenses—has been an earnestly anti-union hosiery manufacturer. And among the Committee for the Nation are men who represent the cotton interests, the warship interests and the aviation interests; one of its directors is the president of the Dairymen's League, regarded by the New York farmers as the agency chiefly responsible for the milk racket against which they are now in rebellion. And one of the Committee for the Nation's chief objects has been to block the Copeland Pure Food and Drugs Bill, inspired by the Bolshevik Tugwell.

You can see the kind of thing which hopes to profit by the defeat of the Pure Food and Drugs Bill in the "Chamber of Horrors" exhibition collected in the Chemical Building. Here are hair dyes that make people bald, beauty lotions that cause the teeth to fall out and give rise to necrosis of the jaw, aniline "lash lures" that cause blindness; inflated and adulterated ice creams, cheese and candy boxes made smaller by false bottoms, malted milk faked out of sucrose, egg noodles faked with yellow wrappers; horse liniment sold as a cure for t.b. and killing the sufferer more quickly than the t.b. germ, diabetes remedies made out of the horsetail weed and exhibited with testimonials on one side and death certificates on the other.

Doctor Wirt, the educational reformer, the disciple of William Morris, cuts a curious figure today as he appears before that background of catarrh remedies, kidney elixirs, female

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tonics, rheumatic compounds, liver aids—inexterminable weaknesses, while capitalism lasts, of the drawbacks of that system of private enterprise which Doctor Wirt is exerting himself to rescue.

And Miss Barrows, who for twenty years admired and worked with Doctor Wirt—she, too, finds herself taking a position which she had never before quite realized was inevitable. Miss Barrows has been brought finally to the conclusion that a new deal in education is impossible without a new social-economic system.

XIII. Japanese Cherry Blossoms

IN Washington everywhere this spring there are signs which direct you to the Cherry Blossoms. The Board of Trade and the Greater National Capital Committee have gotten up a big Cherry Blossom Festival, which has brought five hundred thousand people to Washington and caused them to spend five million dollars. There are fireworks displays, bands, the cherry blossoms lighted up at night, and the coronation of a young female Roosevelt as Queen of the Cherry Blossoms.

The cherry blossoms are Japanese cherry blossoms; and every spring when they bloom, the Japanese ambassador and his family have to have their pictures taken with them for the rotogravure sections of the papers. This year the representative of an anti-war lobby, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, has attempted to persuade the chairman of the Cherry Blossom Parade Committee to take advantage of the opportunity to make a gesture of friendliness toward Japan. Her idea was that they should have a float displaying American and Japanese children together and the slogans, "BLOSSOMS

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NOT BULLETS" and "THE PACIFIC IS A HIGHWAY, NOT A BARRIER."

But the chairman of the Parade Committee and the leader of the parade itself was a certain Major-General Fries, who had formerly been head of the chemical warfare bureau. He told the lady from the League for Peace and Freedom that no such float could be admitted: it would amount to propaganda for peace.

When the cherry blossom parade came off, it included, among the chiffon and pretty faces, thirty-four units of horse-drawn artillery, thirty-six units of motor-drawn artillery, a battalion of the regular army unit of the Third Cavalry and men from every other military unit in Washington. And among the floats was one of Commodore Perry arriving in Uruga Bay with his gunboats; and another which showed the development of the rifle.

FLASHBACK

LIEUTENANT FRANKLIN

Lieutenant Franklin

SAID the captain loudly: "This is something new! Eating with enlisted men!"

They had sat down in the only places left, at a table where some soldiers were lunching.

"Here, boy!" cried the major to a waiter. "*Twa deenay, toot sweet!* Now hurry it right along. We've got to leave here by half past one."

"When are we supposed to get to Trèves?" asked the young second lieutenant.

"Well, if we start on time," replied the major, "we ought to get there by quarter to ten—supposing we don't have any blow-outs—which we unquestionably will—the road's pretty rotten still. They ought to have put a few Americans on it and they'd have a decent road by now. But that isn't the frog idea: never do a thing right in the first place if you can take a long time and do it rotten! They thought it was a brilliant stroke of economy to put the Chinamen to work on the roads. The Chinamen are the only people in the world that have less sense than the frogs. They just have a lot of fun blowing themselves up with old hand grenades. . . . Sure: every time they find one, they take the pin out—with their marvellous Oriental cunning. . . . Sure: the whole road from Nancy to Metz is sprayed with them."

The captain repeated his reprimand: "I suppose that since the Armistice," he said, "the enlisted men are eating with the officers!"

"I beg your pardon, sir," said one of the privates, "but we were here before you!"

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"You better be careful!" blurted the captain, turning red with surprise. He was a short man with a bristling blond mustache and a smartly belted uniform, who administered a filing-cabinet at G.H.Q. with much severity and dash. He looked to the major, his ranking officer, to take up the case against the soldier; but the major, with his square-tipped mechanic's fingers laid out like tools before him on the table, only fixed the harassed and evasive waiter with his searching gold-rimmed goggles, behind which his black eyes themselves had the aspect of a second pair of lenses: a double surveyor's theodolite turning on the axis of his neck.

"Say," he shouted, "come over here, you!—Now what about those three lunches? We've got to leave here by half past one!"

"*Il faut attendre cinq minutes,*" said the waiter. "*La viande n'est pas prête.*"

"*Sank minoot* nothing!" said the major. "We've got to have it right away!—Tell him we've got to have it right away or we'll go somewhere else."

"*Il dit,*" the young lieutenant interpreted, "*que nous ne pouvons pas attendre. Nous voulons le déjeuner tout de suite.*"

"*Ah,*" replied the waiter with a shrug which mingled weariness with malice. "*On ne peut pas toujours avoir tout ce qu'on veut en ce monde!*" He disappeared with his toppling plates.

"What did he say?" demanded the major.

"There's no excuse for this insolence!" declared the captain. "If I were you, I'd complain to the mayor. Morale has been going to pieces ever since the Armistice, and it's high time to jack it up." He glared at the privates, who were leaving.

"Did he try to get fresh?" asked the major.

"Well, more philosophical, I should say," hesitated Lieutenant Franklin. "That's the wonderful thing about the French:

Lieutenant Franklin

they always manage to remain philosophical, no matter how desperate the situation is."

"If they were a little less philosophical," said the major, "we might get a little more service."

Lunch over, they went out into the street and stood a moment in the Place Stanislas, while the major, looking out for the motor car, raked the square with his lenses.

All about them, in chaste beauty of proportion and elegance at once formal and gracious, rose the façades of the eighteenth century. Wide, many-windowed, gray-yellow, they were crowned with rows of torches and panoplies in stone; and they cherished on the *rez de chaussée* the bright cafés that sprinkled tables along the pavement. The lines of Nancy, in the cold December sun, showed as fine and dry as Callot.

Lieutenant Franklin watched the pretty women hurrying by in their brisk serious way, their clear northern complexions bitten red.

The khaki car drew up and they got in.

"We might make it by half past nine," said the major, looking at his watch.

"What do you do up there, major?" Lieutenant Franklin asked.

"Censor's office," replied the major.

"That's what I'm supposed to do. But the joke is I don't know much German. I'm being sent up by mistake. The colonel's away and that damn field clerk down there who's just been made personnel officer got me mixed up with a Lieutenant Frankel. I couldn't convince him he was wrong—he thought I didn't want to go.—I'm afraid I won't be much good in the censor's office: I hardly know German at all. What I'm supposed to know is French."

"That's all right," the major assured him. "I don't know anything. I'm an engineer."

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In the Place de la Carrière, as they honked dictatorially through it, the fallen leaves of the linden trees were yellow in the straight alleys and the rows of brass-knobbed houses met winter with the sober loveliness which does not fade in a pale light. Some of the little hotels about the station had been damaged or gutted by bombs; but in that city which had been molded to harmony as by the touch of a single hand, their scars showed as lightly as chippings.

"How do the Germans treat you?" inquired Lieutenant Franklin.

"Fine," replied the major.

"The Hun," explained Captain Scudder, "is the most servile goddam beast in the world. When he's on top, he's a dirty brute; but when he's licked, he's like a whipped cur. They think they can get let off easy by making up to the Americans. It's a deliberate policy, inspired from Berlin."

"Do you think so?" asked Lieutenant Franklin.

"Why, of course," asserted Captain Scudder, "they're just the same old double-faced bunch. They haven't turned into angels overnight!"

At Pont-à-Mousson, the houses and shops of the square had been battered about like giant children's blocks which an adult giant had knocked over in passing.

The M.P. ran through their orders, stamped the paper and handed it back.

"Pretty quick," noted Major Liggett.

The stout arch of the old stone bridge lay sunk in the river-bed: from the banks stuck out truncated fragments. They crossed on an improvised suspension.

Beyond the river, landscape ceased: crooked trenches cracked a blasted wilderness. It was as if, by dint of titanic effort, the reproductive faculties of nature had at last been conclusively extirpated—as if the earth had been finally divested, not merely

Lieutenant Franklin

of vegetation, but even of color and form. Blackened shattered stumps of trees seemed as strange to the saps of life as the systems of scrawling barb-wire. Beside the road, so many times wrecked that it now seemed beyond reconstruction, ragged fringes of camouflage screens were dangling in miserable fatuity. Here and there neat quiltings of graves were pricked out with wooden crosses.

"Well," remarked Lieutenant Franklin, "it certainly seems funny to be going across here as easy as this!"

For him, the front was a barrier against which four years of life and ammunition had been hurled without effect. He found himself passing it with a kind of awe, as if a wizard's circle had been lifted and the ogrelike race it had protected had been suddenly deprived of their power.

"This the first time you've been through?" asked the major.

"Yes," said Lieutenant Franklin, "the first time."

"Europe's masterpiece!" said the major.

At Metz, they had wakened from a sketchy dream and were back in America again. It was as if their eyes, long unsatisfied by the light tints and unemphasized forms of the French, were at last being fed to the full with solid shapes and thick colors. Amid what seemed now huge masonry of office-buildings and markets, the old French houses survived like fossil ferns in a rock.

Among the German improvements to the cathedral, the Emperor William II still figured in the rôle of the prophet Daniel; but on the esplanade an equestrian statue of the Emperor William I had been precipitated from its pedestal and lay rigid and uncanny in the street, still bestriding its horse.

"The French did that the night of the Armistice," explained Captain Scudder, laughing. "They raised hell with the German inhabitants."

It was with excitement and satisfaction that Lieutenant Frank-

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lin saw for himself that the wrong of Alsace-Lorraine had been righted. Aroused by the pleas of his college president, he had left college for an officers' training camp—had spent eight months in the Middle West and six in the artillery school at Langres, and had finally, two days before the Armistice, found the range on an invisible Belgian town.

They stopped at the station for refreshment. On one of the platforms the French Red Cross was giving out war bread and sugarless coffee to a line of thin dull-faced women. The officers stepped in ahead of the line and received each a cup and a wedge of bread.

"They're foolish to feed 'em," said Captain Scudder. "They've got plenty hidden away in their houses."

Major Liggett, his dynamo stimulated by the coffee, beamed impersonally above the heads of the others. At the sight of the lumpish red station with its exact complicated trainyard, he had something of the feeling of reassurance of being back in Jersey City or New Haven.

"Well," he declared, "it's certainly a great comfort to see a regular train again!"

Lieutenant Franklin assented.

"But now that the frogs have taken them over, needless to say, they won't work any more."

"I guess the French can't help the bad service," Lieutenant Franklin defended them. "The railroads have been disorganized by the War."

"War nothing!" said Major Liggett. "It's the inborn inherent incapacity of the frogs for doing anything right. A ride on a French railroad train is something I never hope to forget! In the first place, the train is late. Then it turns out there aren't any seats. You have to stand up in that little narrow alleyway that runs along beside the compartments. After about an hour and a half, during which the engineer can't decide whether he

Lieutenant Franklin

wants to make the journey or not, the train finally hitches out of the station. Then he gets scared by the bad weather or something and goes back in again and waits another half hour. Finally he gets it out and coaxes it along for about fifteen miles till it dies on-um in the middle of some swamp. Every once in a while it gives a nervous twitch and a door that some frog moron has left open gets jerked back and the glass broken. Oh, la la! Somebody must be hurt!—But that's the only way you ever get any air. That's another thing about the frogs: they hate fresh air—water and fresh air. They're afraid it'll give them some disease to breathe a little raw unworked air.—Last time I went down to Paris, I was lucky and got next to a window and I swore I was going to get a little fresh air if I had to fight the whole compartment. There were two frog women sitting next to me and of course they tried to get me to close the window as soon as I opened it. But *pas compree!* Couldn't understand a word of French. Then they tried to convey the idea by blowing their noses loudly and pulling up their collars around their ears. But I was sound asleep by that time—didn't know a thing about it!”

“Still,” Lieutenant Franklin reminded him, “the French have a lot of endurance.”

“—And you keep your ticket for a souvenir,” said the major, throwing away his cigarette. “Nobody ever takes it up!”

On the admirable motor-road out of the city, an old woman with black clothes and a gray face shook her fist and shouted something abusive after the passing car of the conquerors.

“Did you see that?” demanded Captain Scudder, turning round to the back seat. “They don't consider themselves beaten! And they never will till we go through to Berlin!”

The mounting shadow of the short day closed over them in the Luxemburg forests, dark already with their dense pines.

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Lieutenant Franklin thought them romantic, like the woods in German fairy-tales and ballads.

Then the countryside was flooded with darkness, and with the darkness they all fell silent—while the presence of Germany, enormous and mute, seemed to thicken about them in the night.

At last, smooth boulevards slipped about them and lamps checked off a metropolitan embankment: houses, churches, dark Nuremberg gables, business streets in long solid blocks.

“Well kept up, isn’t it?” commented Lieutenant Franklin.

“Sure,” said the major, “this is a regular country.”

“Yes,” agreed Lieutenant Franklin. “They certainly are darn efficient. How do you find them in other ways?”

“They’re all right in every way, so far as I’m concerned,” said the major.

“I’m afraid you’ll have to sleep in barracks tonight.” Captain Scudder turned around to Lieutenant Franklin. “We didn’t know you were coming this morning, but we’ll fix you up with a billet tomorrow. I think you’ll find yourself pretty comfortable. My quarters are really tophole: the whole of a second floor. That’s one compensation for living in Boche-land: you get the best of everything!—Drive to the barracks,” he ordered the driver.

It was queer: there were no people to be seen. The streets were entirely empty, the houses all dark. Lieutenant Franklin, still haunted by the legend of that terrible race they had vanquished, felt a new vibration of excitement.

The car passed over a wide cobbled court, illumined only by the rays from the headlights, and stopped at an iron grille. The grille was forbidding—it looked feudal; an American soldier was on guard.

Major Liggett examined his watch by the murky light of the gate lantern.

Lieutenant Franklin

"Ten-twenty," he checked up. "Not so bad."

"Just go in," Captain Scudder directed Lieutenant Franklin, "and show your orders to the sergeant-major. Make him fix you up.—We'll get you billeted properly tomorrow."

They exchanged brief military good-nights.

"Go down the hall," said the guard, "and take the second turn to the left—and go upstairs and it's right down the hall."

Lieutenant Franklin entered the gate: it was darker inside than outside. He found himself making his way through a whole college of dark stairs and deserted corridors, vast resounding stone-paved courts and doors with harsh heraldic devices. At last, brought to a halt by the blankness of a landing, he detected a distant glimmer—a door-crack: he groped, lighting matches, to the end of a long gallery, pushed a great door and went in.

He found himself standing in an enormous room which had evidently originally been intended for some august dignitary or function. Tall gilt mirrors, beneath the high ceiling, seemed to open out spaciousness beyond spaciousness; and there was ornate furniture of heroic proportions, upholstered in red plush. In an arm-chair, feet on a table, leggings off and coat unbuttoned, sat a wide-mouthed American non-com reading *The Saturday Evening Post*.

The sergeant got up, without buttoning his coat or, so far as Lieutenant Franklin could see, making much pretense of standing at attention. Yes: he believed it was true, as the captain had said, that discipline was relaxing since the Armistice. But what of it? He smiled at the sergeant as he told him of his wanderings in the building. Then he followed the clump of the sergeant's shoes through more staircases, corridors and courts.

They finally entered a dark room, where the sergeant turned on an electric-light bulb and revealed a kind of large bare cell containing eight iron beds.

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"It used to be a barracks," he explained. "Then they turned it into a hospital, and now they've cleaned it out for the American troops."

"No Germans left here, of course?" inquired Lieutenant Franklin, not without something like awe.

"Only German bed-bugs," said the sergeant.

He left, swinging to a heavy door.

Lieutenant Franklin, alone, contemplated the raw beds with their lumpy straw-filled ticks. In the corner was a pile of rusty bed-pans. He went to the window and gazed out upon the foggy imprisoned court.

Tragic gloom suddenly engulfed him. Within, the room was cold and stale. Outside, the accumulated tedium of a century of pounded drill-grounds seemed to hang in the dreary air. And that gigantic empty shell, beside which the barracks of France looked as flimsy as match-box wood—it was the abandoned armor of the Empire which irreverent pygmies explored. So they had finally hamstrung the giant! reflected Lieutenant Franklin: that was an occasion for triumph and pride. But in that great lifeless carcase, once the breeder of armies, which had pumped the blood of generations, sustaining first the rigors of the regiment, then the long down-grade against death, now evacuated even by the wounded and given up to the vermin and rust—alone in the silence, he could feel only the burden of some definitive and crushing futility. That silence was the silence of the death to which all those men had gone out, the death in which their cries and commands, their groans and howls of laughter, were extinguished; that blank was their annihilation. All the discipline, the energy, the labor, all the hammering of human beings into soldiers, to turn their old training-school over to an American who was hardly a soldier at all!

So much the better!—He took off his cap and began to un-

Lieutenant Franklin

button his coat.—He represented the democracy of the new world which was scrapping all this outworn paraphernalia! It was to teach them to throw it away—it was to teach their young democratic lesson to the pompous brutality of Prussia!—Yes: now that they had the giant at their mercy, they would spare him, they would tell him to go in peace, with their young non-chalant American decency!

Lieutenant Franklin got out a French novel and prepared to read himself to sleep.

II

Lieutenant Franklin went into a cigar-store and, as he did so, it seemed to him that the proprietor and a customer had suddenly stopped talking.

The nice-looking girl at the counter, abandoning another customer who was engaged in selecting a pipe, came forward with a little anxious air, but the lieutenant gestured her back. The man who had been handling the pipes hastily picked one out; the other customer took leave in a low voice.

Lieutenant Franklin noted uncomfortably that the newspaper racks were nearly empty.

He bought his cigarettes, thanked the girl with a smile and left the shop blushing. The rôle of victor among the vanquished embarrassed Lieutenant Franklin. He found himself self-conscious in those streets, hushed so strangely as by imposition of some heavy alien hand. All in mourning, like droves of damned souls condemned in death to go on with business and shopping, they moved past as if they could not see him—faces dulled and withered by grief or fixed unchangeably in glares of indignation or aghast in agonizing bewilderment before the breaking-up of their world. And he knew that it was his presence that made them silent; from all sides their covert scru-

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tiny pricked him. Once when he had suddenly turned his head, a woman had looked away quickly.

The young man would have been glad to relieve this constraint—to deprecate the military formality—to make them understand that the Americans had no quarrel with the German people. He could see that they had once been nice middle-class people; and he wished he could make them feel the sympathy which warmed him at the sight of their Christmas preparations—gold and silver Christmas tree ornaments, children's fairy-books with goblins on the covers, the few poor half-finished, half-hearted toys which were all that was to be had today.

He drifted on toward the censor's office. In the windows of the picture shops, he noticed, the popular subject was the Return of the Soldier: sturdy young fellows, with rifles and belts, striding back into cozy homes, embracing their young wives with tears.—Here and there, the processions of bourgeois black were threaded by the gray-green of an officer, who, deprived of his arms and insignia, was wandering carelessly at large: unlike the civilians, the officers seemed relieved.

In the office, he found Captain Scudder talking emphatically to Major Bradley behind the latter's large desk. Lieutenant Franklin picked up the Paris *Herald*, received in Trèves eight days late. He read with excitement that President Wilson had been welcomed in Paris with an ovation perhaps unexampled in history. To the thunderous salutes of six-inch guns, the loud hum of airplanes, the martial trumpets, the Garde Républicaine playing "The Star-Spangled Banner" and the roaring of a crowd which at the Porte Dauphine had required thirty-six thousand soldiers to restrain it—half buried in a storm of flowers, the President of the United States, accompanied by the ladies of his party and Clémenceau and Poincaré, had driven to the Palais Murat. There he had been received by Prince Murat, his host, who had been standing in the doorway to greet him.

Lieutenant Franklin

Lieutenant Franklin's heart was lifted with pride at the realization that a man of his nation could command such honor abroad—to be fêted by a whole foreign people and received by a foreign prince!

Then Major Liggett stalked in, and the officers sat down to a conference.

"Let's see," began Major Bradley. "Anything to report on the meetings, Major Liggett? . . . Anything to report on the theaters, Lieutenant Franklin? . . ."

Neither Lieutenant Franklin nor Major Liggett had found anything in his department to condemn.

"Well," the major went on, "there's an objectionable editorial in the *Volksblatt* this morning"—the newspapers were Captain Scudder's field—"I've sent for the editor to come around." An officer in the regular army, Major Bradley had inevitably gravitated to a dominant position on the staff and now discharged the function of chief censor.

"What's the matter with the *Volksblatt*?" asked Major Liggett.

"More snarling at the French and English," Captain Scudder explained snarlingly. He took up the paper and read out:

"It is without question somewhat difficult for the German people to believe in the sincerity of the liberal policies of President Wilson. We have in France and England too often seen demonstrated the dishonesty of this liberalism, which has clearly appeared only a masquerade for a conscienceless political opportunism. Herbert Asquith, before the War the chief leader of the English Liberal Party, did not hesitate, when British imperialism had forced Germany to fight England, to justify the policy of the British imperialists, formerly his opponents, with every hypocritical sophistry. 'Hypocritical sophistry!' Does that look as if they knew they were licked?"

The orderly announced "a German outside."

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"Bring him in," said Major Bradley.

The editor of the *Trierische Volksblatt* was a bespectacled pale-eyed man who carried an umbrella in one hand and a flat black hat in the other. He saluted the major respectfully and came to a stiff stand. Major Bradley ignored the salute, not from arrogance but because he had been taught that no true salute can take place when the parties are without hats.

"Your editorial this morning," pronounced the major, in the competent German of West Point, "is in violation of the order that no unfavorable criticism of the policies or the governments of the Entente shall be permitted in occupied territory. You were notified of this when the occupation began."

He showed the man the blue-penciled paper.

The editor of the *Volksblatt* took it nervously and examined it with his pale eyes through his pale nickel-rimmed spectacles.

He tried to explain: "This is not a criticism," he said earnestly. "It is a justification of President Wilson. It is a plea for the Germans to have faith in him." He read aloud what followed. Though the liberals had so often sold out, they were to hope that President Wilson would not betray them.

"You criticize a member of the British government," Major Bradley unrelentingly pointed out.

"Asquith is not now a member of the government," the editor of the *Volksblatt* protested.

The major paused, his square bespectacled upstate farmer's face stoically masking a check.

"In the next paragraph," the editor pressed on, "I criticize also the German Social-Democrats—"

Lieutenant Franklin tried to help him out: "It's an editorial in favor of Wilson. They want to explain that he's not an imperialist—"

He halted as a motor-cycle messenger popped in and jauntily saluted the major.

Lieutenant Franklin

"Oh, yes," said Major Bradley. "Are you leaving right away?"

"Yes, sir,"—the messenger was snappy.

"I've got to write a letter to G.H.Q.," explained the major to the others. "They want to know how many officers to send up. If I get it off this trip, they'll be able to start in the morning."—"Setzen Sie da eine minute," he directed the editor of the *Volksblatt*.

He wrote out his letter with precision.

After a silence, Lieutenant Franklin inquired of Captain Scudder: "Does the order apply to former members of governments?"

"That's only a quibble," said Captain Scudder. "The insolence is there as plain as day.—I certainly don't think we ought to let this get by, sir!"—he addressed himself to Major Bradley, who was folding up his letter. "It's one of the dirtiest attacks on England I've seen!"

"Asquith's a member of the English government, isn't he?" asked the major, giving the letter to the motor-cycle sergeant, who snappily saluted and popped out.

"He isn't any more," said Lieutenant Franklin.

"He's one of their most important public men," insisted Captain Scudder.

"He *has* been a member of the government, hasn't he?"—the major stuck to the order.

"Certainly!" said Captain Scudder.

"Mightn't it be a mistake," suggested Lieutenant Franklin, "to censor the papers too severely just when they're beginning to have confidence in us? Don't you think it's important they should realize that Wilson really intends to give them a square deal? If the *Volksblatt's* going to adopt a friendly policy, perhaps it might be a good plan to let it alone."

"So far as I can see," said Major Liggett, who had hitherto

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sat staring at the proceedings in his detached all-comprehensive way, "the chief objection to suppressing the *Volksblatt* is that, if we do, there won't be any papers left. We've already put the others out of business and if we hang this one up, too, we won't know a damn thing that's happening."

"That mustn't enter into consideration," the major declared severely. "If the order is violated, the paper must be punished."

He summoned the editor back.

"You have printed an attack, have you not, on a member of the British government?" he demanded.

"No, Herr Major: Asquith is not any longer a member of the government."

"But he *has* been a member of the government, hasn't he?"

"Asquith was Prime Minister up until not long ago," said Captain Scudder, "and was one of the chief dictators of British policy."

"You have printed an attack on British policy." Major Bradley delivered his verdict. "The *Volksblatt* will be suspended for ten days.—I don't want to suspend your paper, but you had notice of the conditions of occupation. Don't let it happen again."

"Lieutenant Franklin," Major Bradley called him back as the committee were leaving the room. "When these new officers get here tomorrow, I can relieve you in this office: I've insisted that they shall all speak German. You can go out as A.D.D.C.: they need one down the river. I'll talk to Colonel McCarthy and have your orders made out."

"Yes, sir," said Lieutenant Franklin.

III

Lieutenant Franklin, stationed down the Moselle as "assistant district defense commander," used to kill time by walking into

Lieutenant Franklin

Trèves. He had found that his principal duty—that of disarming the inhabitants—had already been efficiently attended to by the burgomaster of the little town. The latter had had all the weapons collected and put away in a room in the town hall, to which he gave Lieutenant Franklin the key, so that there was nothing left for the lieutenant to do except post a guard at the door. His other duty—billeting new troops—he was never called upon to discharge, as no new troops ever arrived. And the afternoons opened like pits into which he had a horror of falling.

Night would come rapidly down on his return. The hills that walled his path with their frost-blackened trees and naked vineyards, would lose their purple in darkness. The bleak river, breaking the cold, would flee away like fluid iron. From the factories—or from the hills?—there would emerge a sort of stunned race of Nibelungs, who seemed, some to be returning like automata from regular daily work, some simply loitering in suburban roads or under iron bridges, as if, work having suddenly stopped, they had no further idea what to do.

Coming home late one afternoon thus—he had been billeted in the burgomaster's own house—he was surprised to find Captain Scudder.

“Well, old chap,” the captain greeted him, “how goes it? I’ve just been out for a little hike and I thought I’d look in and see how you were.—How are you getting along out here?”

“All right,” replied Lieutenant Franklin, “but it gets to be pretty monotonous. Nothing to do except eat.”

“What do you do?” inquired Captain Scudder. “Have a mess just for one?”

“Oh, no,” said Lieutenant Franklin, “I eat with the family here.”

“You don’t have to, you know,” the captain reminded him.

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"You could have them bring you your own mess in your room—or make them serve you first."

A lady appeared in the sitting-room door but, seeing the captain, did not enter.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," she apologized in French, "I didn't know you had a visitor!"

"This is Madame Hoffer," said Lieutenant Franklin, coming forward. "*Je vous présente le capitaine Scudder.*"

Madame Hoffer bowed; the captain rose, as if perfunctorily.

"What became of you?" asked Lieutenant Franklin. "I looked for you everywhere. I went to all the *Konditorei* in the square."

"Oh, it's not a *Konditorei*," she said smilingly. "It's a little restaurant. You thought it was a *Konditorei* on account of the cakes!—Well, you shall have some *Baumkuchen*, after all! We brought some back with us for you." She held up the paper bag and smiled: her amiable eyes and easy manners carried off the dowdy taste of her dress and the mealiness and dullness of her complexion.

She nodded to Captain Scudder and withdrew.

"Not French, is she?" asked the captain, who had been watching the dialogue with attention.

"Oh, no," said Lieutenant Franklin, "but she talks French because I don't know much German and she doesn't know much English. They all talk French here—the whole family: she's the burgomaster's daughter. They're quite interesting.—They give me German lessons in the evening."

"Look here, old chap," advised Captain Scudder, "I wouldn't get too much mixed up with these people, if I were you. Remember you can never trust a German: that's been proved a thousand times!"

"Oh, they're all right," said Lieutenant Franklin. "Really very nice, in fact."

Lieutenant Franklin

"I wouldn't let them get too affectionate. Just keep your distance!"

"Well, after all—" demurred Lieutenant Franklin: he felt more and more hostile to Captain Scudder, "I mean, the war's over now—"

"Don't be too sure of that," cautioned the captain. "Remember this is only an armistice!"

They talked about the German food and wine, but as the captain got up to go, he returned to his former subject. "Just let me give you a tip," he said, lowering his voice and holding the front door half open so that the outer cold came into the hall and blasted its already feeble warmth. "Better be careful with the natives! The French have been complaining about the Americans getting too friendly with the Germans. I have it direct from G.H.Q. that the C.-in-C.'s taking the matter up. You'll hear something about it very soon!"

"Well," Lieutenant Franklin cut him short, "let's not worry till we hear something definite."

"All right, old chap: I'm simply telling you."

"Thanks a lot for coming out."

"Not a bit: good to see you again!"

"Don't miss the path: the third street to your left."

"Right-o!" He saluted. "Good-night."

Lieutenant Franklin closed the hall door and pushed out the overpowering blackness.

They sat at first only five at dinner: Lieutenant Franklin felt the empty place. There were Frau Hoffer and her youngish husband, a schoolmaster, with cropped bristling head and a black shiny alpaca coat; the burgomaster, whose white upturned mustaches still followed the fashion set by the Kaiser; and an American sergeant, all in one chunkish piece, who had been assigned Lieutenant Franklin as interpreter on the strength of fifty or sixty words of German handed down from Michigan

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grandparents and lopped in the transit of most of their inflections. Frau Hoffer found the sergeant amusing and always spoke of him as "Monsieur Schwab."

"Well," announced the lieutenant triumphantly, "I see that Clémenceau has come out for a League of Nations."

"That will be a League of Nations for the Entente and not for anybody else," said the schoolmaster, "if it's Clémenceau who is organizing it. The Entente is already a League of Nations. No doubt, it's that he means."

"But America," protested Lieutenant Franklin, "will insist upon a league for the whole of Europe!—"

The burgomaster's second daughter appeared and took her place at the table. She was a small but sturdy girl of twenty-two, whom the rest of the family called Bäbchen—red cheeks, dark serious eyes and a straight profile almost American.

"It was so stupid of me to miss you today!" said Lieutenant Franklin eagerly. "I'd been counting on it. I'm so terribly sorry!"

"We were sorry, too," she smiled. "However, we brought you some cake."

"That was very nice of you: I don't deserve it." And he returned to the international situation with an ardor stimulated by her presence. "That's precisely the reason," he insisted, "that President Wilson has come to Europe. President Wilson isn't working for the Entente: he's working for justice for everybody!"

The schoolmaster shrugged his shoulders: "I don't think it's possible to have justice in Europe. The nation who wins will never consent to it."

The old woman who waited on the table told the burgomaster there was someone to see him, and he excused himself and went away.

The liveliness which had revived with the oil-lamps of dinner

Lieutenant Franklin

declined when the *Baumkuchen* had been finished. The conversation suddenly lapsed; all stared blankly into their plates. The terrible ennui of evening was upon them.

"*Encore une soirée!*" said Frau Hoffer, with a sigh. "*Je veux dire—encore un soir!*"

"That's just what we need—a soirée!" Lieutenant Franklin rose to the idea: the visit of Captain Scudder had made him particularly genial. "Why not have a party tonight?"

"Go to the Sans-Souci?"—Frau Hoffer glanced toward her husband. "Do you have to work tonight?"

The burgomaster returned. "There is an affair," he said, sitting down, "which it is impossible for me to arrange. Two French soldiers, coming from Trèves, have driven off old Hermann's cow.—Old Hermann," he explained to Lieutenant Franklin, "depends for his living on the milk from his cow.—*Voici le règne de la justice qui commence!*"

"What a shame!" said Lieutenant Franklin. "But I suppose the Americans can't do anything about it." Not knowing what else to say, he returned, after a pause, to the party. "Do come with us!" he pressed Herr Hoffer. "We'll have some wine at the Sans-Souci."

"Very well," the schoolmaster consented, lighting a cigarette—a little like a Frenchman, thought Lieutenant Franklin. "I shall go badly prepared to my class tomorrow."

They were cheerful as they put on their things.—The burgomaster stayed behind.

Outside, the river-mist obscured everything: only a fur of ammonia vapor revealed the manure pile.

They found the Sans-Souci a clean bright room, orange-lighted with oil-lamps and heated by a glowing stove. The old lady and her daughter who ran it were delighted to receive a party in winter. They brought yellow cake and clear yellow wine which, on the red and white checkered cloth, looked more

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cheerful to Lieutenant Franklin than anything he had seen yet in Germany.

"Here's to peace!" he proposed, beaming, as they clinked their goblet rims.

"To Justice!" suggested Herr Hoffer.

"To Peace with Justice!"—the lieutenant took him up. "How marvellous Moselle wine is!"

"We should have some music," said Frau Hoffer. "Play us a waltz, Bábchen."

"Oh, yes: do!" urged Lieutenant Franklin. "The Blue Danube Waltz!"

"I'm afraid I can't remember it all," said Bábchen. But she took her place on the piano-stool and, sitting straight-backed as if at drill, went through it with military precision.

Lieutenant Franklin, dancing with Frau Hoffer, wondered at the vigor in Bábchen's small arms.—They were strong people, fine women! The arrival a few days ago of Bábchen had greatly improved Lieutenant Franklin's state of mind. Before that, the French novels to which he had become addicted, had been exciting him and making him uneasy. He would lie under the feather-bed in his room and dope himself with them for hours. That was one reason the afternoons were distressing: he would break away and walk into Trèves and find himself eying the girls in the streets and wondering whether any were prostitutes. He disapproved of prostitution, and since Bábchen's return his emotions had risen quickly to a higher plane. She was not like a French *jeune fille* and not like a French married woman, as one read about them in the novels—she was something much more like an American girl. She had been married a very short time: her husband had been killed in Galicia.

When the dance was done, he ordered another bottle. Bábchen started another Strauss waltz.

"Come!" Frau Hoffer invited the sergeant, who had been

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waiting like a good dog. "Don't you want to dance, Monsieur Schwab?"

The lieutenant filled Herr Hoffer's glass and sat down at the table across from him. They smiled frankly at one another. Any lingering military self-consciousness which had hitherto inhibited Lieutenant Franklin had been wholly dissolved by the wine. The whole thing—Americans and Germans, officers and enlisted men—was irregular from Captain Scudder's point of view; but to hell with Captain Scudder!

"What did you think of the French?" he asked Herr Hoffer.

The schoolmaster had been captured in the first battle of the Marne and had spent the whole war in a French prison-camp.

Herr Hoffer shrugged his shoulders—yes, Lieutenant Franklin thought again, almost exactly like a Frenchman: he had evidently learned all that in France. "They treated me well enough," he replied. "When they found I was an educated man, they set me to doing clerical work and they allowed me to have books to read."

Through the long unrolling rhythms of music that wove the room with their sweet wreaths, the lieutenant saw in Herr Hoffer's face the tarnish of those four years of prison. Like the blotting out of four years of life! And then to come back at last to these evenings, heavy with helplessness and ruin, to take up teaching the undernourished children in the dismal village school!

"—I read almost the whole of French literature."

"How did you like it?" asked Lieutenant Franklin.

"Very remarkable for polish and form—but superficial in thought and feeling."

"Come, Carl!" said Frau Hoffer, returning with the sergeant.

"You haven't forgotten how to dance, have you?"

Sergeant Schwab sat down beside Lieutenant Franklin.

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Bäbchen began unexpectedly to bang out "The Stars and Stripes Forever."

"Well, well!" Lieutenant Franklin hailed it. "An old friend! Do they play that much in Germany?"

"It used to be a great favorite."—Frau Hoffer danced off with her husband.

"I heard the band play that in Galveston," said Sergeant Schwab, taking a drink of wine, "the day the troops came back from Vera Cruz.—That was one of the swellest things I ever saw in my life. There was big rows of oleanders—pink and white—on both sides of the street, and it was paved with red bricks—a regular Southern town, yuh know. There'd just been a shower of rain and then all of a sudden the sun came out and shone on the red bricks and those old oleanders were sparkling like diamonds! And the bands were playing 'The Stars and Stripes Forever'!"

"That must have been great!" said Lieutenant Franklin.

"That's the kind of thing that takes your speech!" declared Sergeant Schwab.

"Still," observed Lieutenant Franklin, after giving it a moment's reflection, "I suppose that the Germans were being thrilled by it just as much when they were getting ready to raise hell with the French!"

He ordered another bottle and made Bäbchen join them at the table. They received her with cheers and clapping; the lieutenant proposed her health. Then Frau Hoffer took her place at the piano and began playing from the score of "*Das Dreimäderlhaus*," the great popular operetta of the war.

"'*Dreimäderlhaus*' is wonderful, isn't it!" said Lieutenant Franklin to Bäbchen. "I went to see it three times in Trèves!"

"It is the true story of Schubert's life, you know," Bäbchen explained seriously, charmingly. "He was in love with a lady

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who did not love him. He wrote his most beautiful songs for her."

Sweet and deep he drew it from her eyes, the romantic longing of the music. How much he would like to kiss her! Those merry young fellows in "*Dreimäderlhaus*" with the *Konzertmeister's* daughters!—so free and gay, in blue brass-buttoned coats, in the fresh Viennese spring . . . drinking under the lilac trellis, drinking to the lindens and their loves!—But it wouldn't, he thought, be correct to—besides, she mightn't like him enough.

But he came out with a bold proposal: "Won't you let me take you to the theater in Trèves some night?"

"Thank you: I should like to very much.—If it is possible." She smiled.

Possible? Why shouldn't it be possible? Who were the Scudders to bully him?

"It's not very gay here," she went on. "We don't have much music now. In Dresden, they have good music in all the cafés. We used to go to the opera every week."

"Dresden must be a marvellous city!" exclaimed Lieutenant Franklin.

"Yes: it is a fine city. I like Dresden very, very much.—We used to go out very early Sunday morning—my husband and I, with our friends—and have breakfast in the Grosser Garten. We would have breakfast on the shores of the Carola-See: a beautiful little lake. We'd feed the swans with the crumbs. They have beautiful swans in the Grosser Garten. I liked Dresden very much.—"

He saw her sent back to her provincial sewing—that old threadbare couch in the burgomaster's house—no more music, no more friends, no more outings in the Grosser Garten!

—"But even Dresden," she added, "is not the same since the War."

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"Nothing is the same anywhere since the War!" He suddenly took fire from her reply. "Everybody has lost by the war! Nobody has anything to gain from war!—Nobody really wants it. I don't suppose you wanted it any more than we did!—And now that everybody knows they don't want it, there must never be another!—That's why America came into it—so that there should never be another war!"

"Yes," she looked up at him with strong soft eyes, "I don't think that the Americans hate us."

Of course not! How proud he felt that she knew it! He was aware of his cleanness, his blondness, his straightness—he was exalted to know himself an American: heir to the War of Independence, soldier of the American Republic! They had left the intrigues, the antagonisms, the greeds of the old world behind—and now they had come back to save it! *He* was not pledged to hate the Germans—he was pledged to humanity and justice. And he loved them all!—he loved Herr Hoffer, who had read through the whole of French literature in a French prison-camp and had found it polished but superficial; Sergeant Schwab, who had been stricken speechless by the rain and oleanders of Galveston; dear Bábchen, who had liked to take breakfast out of doors and to feed the beautiful swans.

Everything in him that had been kicked and kept under during the months he had spent in the army—by the naggings and snubs of superiors, by the months of suffocating boredom, by the brutalities of the artillery school at Langres, by the intolerable horror of artillery itself; blowing people to shreds whom you had never seen, so that you had to try to occupy your mind with the mathematical and technical end, all culminating in Captain Scudder!—his spirit rose to reject the army and everything that made the army possible and to affirm human solidarity! Now forever there must be no more hatred, no more

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slaughter, among Christian peoples!—men who were moved by the same music, made gay by the same wine!

All about them, outside the little room, opened the desolation of Europe: the starved fatigue of the living, the abyss—one could not look into it!—of the dead, that world which had been cursed for four years with the indictment of every natural instinct, the abortion of every kindly impulse. And tonight in this bright-lit room, where still the wine from Moselle grapes was yellow, where still Schubert's music swam in sun, the fellowship of men was reviving after the bitterness, the agony, the panic! Had young German girls like Bábchen—and young French and young English and young Americans—been cheated of spring-time and music and youth? Well, the Americans were there to see to it that the children of the future were not cheated! . . . The Americans and Germans were much alike . . . they were all speaking that fine language, French. . . . He wondered whether he couldn't do something about that poor old man and his cow. It would make Bábchen like him. . . . What if he should marry her? . . .

He watched her lips, so good-natured and full, finishing words he had not heard her speak. A sudden utterance took shape in his thought: it demanded expression in German.

"*Sie sind sehr schön!*" he said abruptly, earnestly, and took her hand under the table.

"*Sie sind sehr freundlich das zu sagen,*" she answered with grave eyes, leaving her hand in his.

Herr Hoffer and the sergeant had been driven by the wine to the toilet; Frau Hoffer, at the piano, had her back to them. He kissed Bábchen's lips with grave tenderness.

A deep blush flooded her face and flooded her pretty round neck and spread under her plain blue beads and under the black border of her mourning.

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IV

The next day Lieutenant Franklin received the general order against fraternizing with the Germans.

The facts were now notorious: the Americans and the French, since the Armistice, had been getting to hate each other worse and worse; and the Americans were making buddies of the Germans. The situation had come to a head in a riot in the Trèves railroad station: some French soldiers had tried to ride the Germans and some American soldiers who had been there, had sided with the Germans and beaten up the French.

He received also a special order informing him that he had been relieved of duty in Germany and was immediately to proceed to France.

He went in to see Colonel McCarthy. The Chief of Staff had just come into his office and was regarding the pile of papers which confronted him with the unconquerable hostility of a man who has never felt at ease with reading and writing. A regular army officer, like Major Bradley, he had, like him, risen irresistibly to an important post on the staff.

"I simply thought," Lieutenant Franklin suggested, not without a note of pleading, "that if it was on account of my not knowing German, I can really get along perfectly well out there because they all speak French. Besides, I've been taking German lessons lately—"

"We don't want somebody who's learned it lately," interrupted Colonel McCarthy, "we want somebody who already knows it." He was a tall man with graying hair and a disagreeable sulky mouth: years of inaction at army posts with nothing to think about but promotion, imagined Lieutenant Franklin.

"Very well, sir," he assented sadly.

"—And we want somebody," pursued the Colonel, glaring

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at an intelligence report he had picked up, "who won't talk too much French or German or anything else! You had no instructions to take German lessons!"

On the stairway, he met Major Liggett stalking by with his hands in his ulster pockets.

"Well," Lieutenant Franklin accosted him, assuming a comic tone, "they're sending me back again!"

"That so?" replied Major Liggett. "Well, I guess we can all go home now—I see that Scudder's got his major's commission."

"How did he manage that?" asked the lieutenant. "I thought that since the Armistice they weren't handing out any more promotions."

"Only for regular army officers," Major Liggett ironically explained, "or for close friends of regular army officers."

"How did he get such a drag with them?"

"Why, look at the service he's rendered! The very first thing he gets here, he puts all the papers out of business. And now since the frogs have been squealing about the Americans getting too intimate with the Germans, he's been a regular little Hawkshaw—watching to see that the Americans don't give any candy to German children.—He tried some of that stuff on me—wanted to drop in on me in my billet some evening. But I toldum I got so exhausted with the work that I just went right home and went to bed. He saw me taking a Christmas present to my old woman and he tried to intimate I was sleeping with her. A hundred and fifty years old—the original German witch!"

Major Scudder marched briskly up, the gold oak-leaves gleaming on his shoulders.

"Well, old boy, I congratulate you!" he greeted Lieutenant Franklin. "I hear you're going back to France! We envy you, don't we, major?"

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“You may,” replied Major Liggett, “but if I’ve got to be over here at all, give me the Germans every time. There’s only just one country to go back to—and to stay in and to never leave!”

U. S. S. R.

MAY—OCTOBER, 1935

I. Old England

I FOUND that I was not unmoved to see the shores of England again. The Isle of Wight, with its velvet fields, its great houses level with the water and its spreading symmetrical trees, softened and made rich by the moist air and under a troubled sky, reminded me of Tennyson and the greenwood tree and Victoria at Osborne Castle.

When I had last seen the Isle of Wight, we had been anchored in a troop-ship outside Southampton Harbor, waiting for a clear night to cross. When it got dark, the British soldiers would cluster together at the bow and sing a lugubrious convivial song:

“Here’s to good old sherry—
 Drink ’er down, drink ’er down!
Here’s to good old sherry—
 Drink ’er down, drink ’er down!
Here’s to good old sherry,
 For it makes you feel so merry!
Here’s to good old sherry—
 Drink ’er down!

Raolling ’aome, raolling ’aome,
By the light of the silvery mune.
 Ha-ha ha-ha ha!
 And a ha-ha ha-ha ha!
Here’s to good old sherry—
 Drink ’er down!”

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How abysmally that gaiety of soldiers getting shipped back to France seemed to have been swallowed up by time!

Yet there were the docks where we had waited. I had been trying to remember our embarkment, and now I had it again: the horrible blankness and boredom as we had sat on our packs at the pier. My memory had struck it out. At Southampton, we had slept on the ground, in a rest-camp which was deep in water. I had read in the English papers little scraps about more trouble in Russia with men named Lenin and Trotsky coming to the top. Walking back and forth among the beech-woods, I had run into a man whom I had known at school and who was now a lieutenant in the Infantry. I had never seen him again because he was killed soon afterwards; and now I was returning to Europe with books about Lenin and a Russian grammar.

Nevertheless, as I went up to London in the little neat, green, fast boat-train, green England, all a park, all a garden—the patches of mosslike lawn, the trees planted long ago to grow in a certain way and kept carefully clipped by their masters, the little dark shining streams, which had been domesticated, too—seemed to me lovely, familiar and dear.

But London, when I got there, was a shock. I had not really seen it since 1914, and the city seemed now so changed that I could hardly find my way. London looked much like Chicago. I had found on the boat that I was oddly depressed to discover that the old English weeklies were full of pictures of Hollywood actresses; and now I was confronted in London with the same insipid neon signs, the same uniform yellows and reds that glow without seeming to burn, the same pretentious movie palaces with gaudy decorations and people waiting outside in long queues, the same tabloids, the same newspapers with no

Old England

news in them, the same cheap window displays in drug stores and five-and-ten-cent stores, which I thought I had left behind at home. And the different sections of London—Leicester Square, Trafalgar Square, the Strand—which I remembered as things quite distinct, now seemed neon-lighted and submerged in one great amusement center and traffic nexus. I tried to find something I recognized, but I had to ask my way to Regent Street and I had to walk a long way before I remembered Liberty's.

I realized with some astonishment that it really was true that I had grown up in one world and lived to inhabit another. Except for a few hours in 1921, I had not been here since the summer of 1914. I had been here on Bank Holiday when war was declared and seen people riding on top of taxis and gathering around Buckingham Palace and calling for the King and Queen. Now they were celebrating the Jubilee of the same king and queen; but in the meantime they had had the War, the dole, the General strike. The Jubilee seemed to me flat, mostly neon signs.

I tried a musical show, "1066 and All That," and was more let down than before. There was none of the old coarse clowning of the music hall, and there was little that was really satiric. The revue, to be sure, was made to center about a character called "The Common Man," who was supposed to wander through history and always to get the worst of it; but his misfortunes seemed to have no upshot except that at the end of the evening he sang "God Save the King" with the rest. There was a sketch in which Guy Fawkes and Columbus were arraigned before a magistrate: Guy Fawkes for not blowing up Parliament, Columbus for discovering America. Columbus of course chewed gum and was made to talk like a gangster, and one of the charges against him was that he had ruined the English

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language. Yet the show was full of gags based on American slang like "You're telling me!" and "Oh, yeah!" The author had gotten hold of phrases which were stale and fading out at home and featured them as curtain lines, as if by themselves they must be breathtaking. I had never seen anything quite like this in an English revue before, and the effect was queer and unpleasant. Where was the language and the humor of the English? Did they create no new idiom any more? Had they lost touch with their historical tradition till it no longer had enough reality even to provide subjects for jokes? Shakespeare seemed a long time ago.

As I came back through the streets at night, I saw men and women lying in doorways and digging in garbage-cans for food just as I had left them in Chicago and New York.

II. London to Leningrad

WHEN I boarded the Soviet boat the next morning, the sailor who carried my bags refused a tip.

It was strange to find the little broad white steamer flying the red flag with its one yellow star and the yellow hammer and sickle, so close to the Tower of London. Unlike an English boat, it did not start on time; but the atmosphere of amiable informality was a relief after an English liner. And it was exhilarating to swim out of the Thames, with the radio playing Strauss waltzes and old Sousa marches. The great jaws of the turreted Tower Bridge unclamped to let us pass; and we shook off the dark old docks and all the river traffic: coal barges and trim little boats with dark-tarnished brick-red sails.

I went down to my cabin and found the three young Russians who shared it with me huddled around the porthole, sing-

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ing sad-sounding Russian songs. In the cabin next to ours somebody was practicing the cornet.

There was a piano in the saloon and somebody very soon sat down to it and began playing old banal airs on which he would give out halfway through. It was a sober but bright little room—quite different from the ship-shape comfort of the English—with gray walls and shiny woodwork. There was a series of inlaid panels depicting deer on Siberian wastes of snow and wild lakes and rock formations like Canada and the American West. There was one extremely uncomfortable feature: the chairs at the writing desks were straight-backed, absolutely hard and fastened tight to the floor.

The little blond stewardesses and kitchen girls were pretty though somewhat slatternly. They insisted on doing their work in high heels, which had gotten worn down and pushed out; and while they worked, they smoked cigarettes, which dangled out of their mouths.

When we went into the dining-room for tea, we found caviare, jam, candy, sliced sausage and sardines and herring set out around flowerpots, petticoated in white paper, of little primrose-like purple flowers. A man came around from time to time with a kettle and asked you whether you would have some tea: no obsequious service as with the British. Here, too, the chairs were fixed to the floor so that you could not draw them up to the table. With all that is lax in Russia, there is, as I was afterwards to find, always something of which the severity is terribly overdone.

A new smell on the boat, new soap, towels of a new size and shape, new people, new food, a new language. I walked around in a kind of elation.

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In the evening, a jazz-band of Jewish musicians who had been forced to leave Nazi Germany and were going to try their luck in Russia, practiced in the saloon. Everybody came in to listen: the captain, the passengers, the purser, the crew, the little girls with their cigarettes and their handkerchiefs around their heads. When the jazz-band knocked off for the night, one of the sailors sang Russian songs; then the crew—one very handsome boy with a sullen adolescent's mouth—played some English phonograph records, including, notably, "Got the Jitters!" till the owners came and took them away; then they fell back on their Russian records, which included a curious Russian version of the old American darky song, "Po' Monah."

All this was very different from what I had expected: I had been prepared for something rather grim.

As I sat up late reading, one of the girls came to put away the phonograph. I tried to ask her whether she wanted to turn out the lights; but she gestured for me to stay, making cunning little sounds like the language of mice.

The three young men in my cabin had been sent by the Soviet government to study American coke processes. They had bought American clothes and two of them, at any rate, looked very much like Americans. They all had fairly important jobs: one was Chief Engineer at the coke by-products plant in Magnitogorsk. They seem to try as much as possible in Russia to put young people at the head of things.

I got a very good impression from these men of the quality of the new Soviet culture. They were natural and frank like Americans, but, unlike Americans, were very quiet and behaved toward one another and toward me with the most extraordinary consideration. One night when I was going to stay up after the others had gone to bed, I turned out the light as I left

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the state-room, but they protested that I would need it later and, though I had left it turned out, I found when I came down that they had turned on another for me. If they were up earlier than I was in the morning, they would talk almost in whispers in order not to wake me.

It was strange for me to hear them speak naturally, with no consciousness of asserting a point of view, of "the Imperialist War" where we should say "the World War." It seemed so amazing that a single man should have impressed upon the thought of a whole people a conception of society and history which changed the very names of past events.

I was reading in Krupskaya's memoirs the story, which would be almost unbearable if it were not told so coolly, of the poverty, imprisonment, exile, persecution, insanity and suicide with which Lenin's generation had paid to make possible these young men.

It is fun traveling on Russian boats. There is a general quiet amiability, and everybody does what he pleases. The Soviet liquidation of social and racial distinctions comes to affect even the attitude of foreigners, and all classes, nationalities and colors are able to meet and talk freely together. It had a little the atmosphere of a club: the international club of people interested in the Soviet Union. The weather was marvelous: the middle of May.

The only passengers who did not seem at ease were three English people who sat at my table. There were two ladies traveling together and a man traveling by himself; and there seemed to exist between them some impassable social gulf—so that, though I, as an American, could talk to either of them, they were unable to talk to each other. One of the ladies was a woman doctor who had seen a good deal of Europe and who had dragged the other lady off on this trip. She was evidently

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an old maid and wore her mouse-colored hair in a bun. The other—both were quite elderly—was a married woman with grown-up children. She had still a certain firm Tennysonian blue-eyed English-gentlewoman prettiness. They were the very best upper middle-class and carried a certain kind of thing to a point which, I realized as I talked to them, we in America could only approximate.

The unfamiliar Russian food deeply worried these English people. "I've never seen tea with lemon before!" said the man with something like alarm. The milder and more naïve of the ladies, when confronted the first morning with caviare for breakfast, took it for marmalade, but, imperturbably masking her surprise, remarked that it would be good to make sandwiches. When sliced sausage appeared, she declined the bologna, saying quietly, "It's a little unusual, isn't it?"; but took some salami, murmuring, "It's more like what we have at home." And when I said that the enclosed upper deck was probably intended for drinking, the man, in a low voice and with a look of consternation as if he were disclosing a horrible secret on which he had been brooding long, exclaimed: "There *aren't* any drinks!" I told him that there were vodka, wine and cognac. "There's no beer aboard!" he said. The sturgeon, as to which they couldn't at first be sure whether it were meat or fish, put them all to a severe test: the situation seemed to elicit almost as much self-restraint as if it had been a shipwreck.

The milder lady, in her mild way, was uncompromisingly snooty about America: she said that she had understood that there were a great many Presbyterians there. The only thing connected with America in which she seemed to feel an interest was the career of Lady Astor. She inquired about Lady Astor's family and evidently assumed that I, as an American, must regard her as the highest product of the civilization of the United States. She also inquired about the Duponts, who, she

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understood, had noble French blood. In connection with Russia, they were much concerned about the fate of the tsarist nobility, discussed the execution of the royal family with a peculiar combination of horror and relish, and were inclined to believe in the genuineness of the supposed Grand Duchess Anastasia, because the sister of the woman doctor had known, or had known somebody who had known, the nurse who had identified her.

It had been the woman doctor's experience that if you did things for the poor, they were ungrateful; and her quieter and sweeter companion admitted that no one for whom she had done anything had ever shown her any gratitude, and she told a long story about a woman, "a woman of education, evidently a lady," who had had children and been very poor and had tried to borrow money from her. In her quiet and gentle way she rolled on her tongue this woman's humiliation.

The Englishman never told me what he did and he was usually silent at the table; but by talking to him between meals I discovered that he was by way of holding radical views. He had very little idea of Marxism, did not know what the Comintern was; but he had just read John Strachey's book, "The Coming Struggle for Power," and seemed to be very much impressed by it. He didn't know, he said, what had happened to political life in England: when he had been young, a situation like the present would have aroused great public excitement. He supposed people's indifference was due to the fact that the issues were becoming too complicated, too difficult to understand. It used to be that people just took sides, as they did over the Oxford-Cambridge boat-race. The Fabians had died away, and he didn't see anybody to take their place. The English nowadays, he told me, were paying a lot of attention to the United States, but very little to the Soviet Union. They

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didn't even print the news about it. English free speech and justice existed only theoretically: you needed money for the courts, and although you could write what you pleased, there were many things you couldn't get printed. I asked him where the English got their opinions: "Many of 'em haven't gottany!" he replied.

He was very funny in his solemn way about English relations with Russia—the complaints of the English embassy that they couldn't get English food in Moscow. He was traveling in his vacation and had only three weeks for his trip. I liked him. He was elderly, bespectacled, long-faced, dry, independent. He had a good deal of the best of the English middle class.

I woke up to find the porthole divided by a straight line, on the upper side of which were land, grass, people, houses and cows. It was the Kiel canal: Schleswig-Holstein. Flat grass-grown grazing land in a funny bleak-for-all-the-lushness yellow morning light. Men and boys riding bicycles in visored German caps. A barefoot girl in a field; a woman darkly dressed. All the figures of people seemed dark, walking along the straight roads among groves of tall straight trees. Red cattle; farm-houses all alike, with high red corrugated roofs against the northern winds.

Kiel: a peremptory sign in thick upstanding German characters, which forbade the taking of photographs, "from the bridge, the water or the shore, of the ships in the Kaiser-Wilhelm Canal."

Out into the Baltic, foggy and gray.

One day I decided to take a bath. I rang, and there appeared, after an interval, a gray, thin and anxious-looking elderly

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woman. I asked whether I could have a bath, and she said something in Russian and vanished. Then she came back, looking anxious but saying nothing: then she went away again. Then, after a long, long wait, during which I was afraid she had forgotten about it or was not the proper person, one of the little stewardesses appeared and smilingly unlocked the bathroom door and showed me how the faucets and the shower worked. Then she handed me a towel of the thickness and texture and non-absorptive properties of a napkin. I called her attention to the fact that there was no plug, and she immediately went off and got one. It turned out that there was only one plug for both the men's and the women's baths, and that they carried it back and forth.

None of the things did what she said they would do. A short spurt of hot water from the hot faucet was followed by coldish water. The shower, when I turned it on, trickled a few drops, then did nothing. The bathroom, which was under a stairway, had no means of ventilation and was heated like a Turkish bath by the hot-water pipes that ran through it. There was no latch on the door, and as I lay in the cold water and the suffocating heat, people would walk in on me from time to time and then with exclamations withdraw. I was afterwards to learn that latches on bathroom and toilet doors and plugs for wash-basins and bathtubs hardly exist in Russia.

When I reached for the roller towel, it immediately came off the roller, and I fell against the hot-water pipes and burned my elbow severely.

In the smoking-room, I talked to a little boy of nine who had left Russia when he was five and had been living at Sea Gate, Brooklyn. He asked me whether I thought Lenin was a good man, whether I was with the Communists, and whether I believed in God. In the Soviet Union, he told me, they cured

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children of believing in God by shutting them up in a room and pointing out that if God existed, he would do something to get them out. He asked me how in the world people had ever come to believe in God in the first place.

The last day: "The Beautiful Isle of Capri," which I had left them singing in America, came in over the radio in Lettish. We passed near a low dark coast, some outlying island of Finland: pine-wooded, rugged, lonely.

When we came in to dinner, we found a bottle of wine on every table, and the dining-room became quite lively. Not at our table, however. The English people would hardly touch the wine.

"Everybody's letting themselves go," said the milder of the two ladies, not even glancing around. "It's going to be rather awful, I'm afraid!" She advised us to keep to ourselves, as there was some sort of cold about.

The man, who sat next to the porthole and who usually looked out and said nothing, called our attention to a little island with a tower and some buildings on it. "Lonely-looking place," said the man. The ladies began to talk about lighthouses.—"People in lighthouses take to drink."—"So that then they're not any good, I suppose."—"Or go mad."—"Perhaps radio helps them: then they can at least hear what other people hear."—The mild lady told a story about a woman left alone in a lighthouse with three small children. The woman got bitten by a snake, and, knowing that the bite would be fatal and that the children would be helpless without her, she killed them before she died.—"Couldn't she suck the poison out?" asked the doctor.—"It would be in her back or somewhere she couldn't reach," the milder lady replied.—"Couldn't she hope the husband would come back in time?" said the doctor, still trying to

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find a loophole for the unfortunate lighthouse woman.—“He would be somewhere very far off,” replied the other lady, with quiet firmness—and added, with quiet admiration: “Her nerve!”—She followed this up with another story about a woman who was afraid of snakes: she had kept crying, “Wolf! Wolf!” until finally she had really been bitten by a snake and her husband wouldn’t go.—“What a dreadful thing!” said the doctor. “I suppose it was too late to do anything.”—“Died,” said the other lady, with deep quiet satisfaction.—She had another story which I have forgotten but of which the conclusion was, “Government’s doing something for her, I believe.”

There was a wonderful dessert at this last dinner: a mound of vanilla ice-cream swimming in pink grenadine juice and surmounted by a small piece of cake with a small lump of sugar set in it. The sugar had been saturated with vodka and was supposed, as the Englishman said, to “come on flaming”; but the waiter succeeded in setting fire to the little paper skirt on one of the flowerpots, which blazed up in quite a conflagration. The English ladies were disturbed by this, but, of course, behaved splendidly. The waiter, with Russian insouciance, hovered around it ineffectively for a while, then carried it off blazing to the kitchen.

On that last night, the ladies, who had been eating with the man four times a day for five days, asked him whether he were an Englishman. The Englishman answered yes, and the conversation went no further.

The Chaikovsky-Pushkin opera, “*Pikovaya Dama*,” began to come in on the radio from Leningrad.

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It was still light at ten, and we could see a sloping rocky shore. There were faint strips of pink in the dimming blue sky and above them opaque gray clouds. The North, sheer and clean and awful, the clear bleak top of the world.

When I went down to my cabin, I found that the young men had got hold of my Russian grammar and were reading aloud the extracts from Pushkin which were included as exercises. Hitherto, the only thing I had seen them read was a large work in two volumes on coke processes, translated from the German. They told me in their unemphatic way that Pushkin was a great poet. I got into my bunk and listened. They lay on their backs in their berths full of silent appreciation. I observed for the first time how poetry, like music, is for Russians a natural food.

When I went up on deck again, the big opaque cloud had broken up and one saw through its fragments the last cold light—hardly distinguishable from moonlight except that it grows constantly less luminous—of the vanished sun of the northern day.

In the morning, I told the English ladies about the boys' reading Pushkin in the cabin and asked them whether English engineers would read Shakespeare under similar circumstances. For a moment, this gave them pause. But they soon rallied. The mild one remarked that Pushkin was very simple. The woman doctor, who had studied Russian to do something in connection with the War and had read one of Pushkin's stories, but did not know that he had written poems, remarked it was very much easier to read prose fiction aloud than poetic dramas like Shakespeare. I told her that Pushkin was the great Russian poet. "Great for *them*," said the mild lady firmly—and added: "Pushkin's poems are very simple little things."

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The ladies had been wondering about tips and had finally learned that a collection which had been taken up in the Third Class was to be given to the Comintern. "You don't want your money to go to that, do you?" said the doctor shortly and sharply. The Englishman was vague about it, and I said that I didn't mind. The woman doctor contracted with something like a nervous spasm. "Well, I do!" she said savagely, narrowing her eyes. "They can have it in their own country, but they needn't try to impose it on other people!"

From the moment they left the boat, they never either spoke to or recognized any of their former fellow passengers.

An American coming to Russia from England discovers not without surprise that in certain fundamental respects he has more in common with the Russians than with the English. The people in Europe who speak his language are in some ways the furthest removed from him. The English, with their antiquated social system, cannot forgive a branch of their own race who have scrapped that system and prospered. On the other hand, the Soviet Union is certainly the European country which has most in common with ours. When we travel from London to Leningrad, we realize, however pessimistic we may have been before we left the United States in regard to the operation of capitalism in producing class differences and antagonisms, that American democracy means more than we thought. Our period of pioneering was more like the present period in Russia which is preoccupied with settling new country, constructing new industrial plants and developing natural resources, than like anything else that has happened in Europe; and the American and the Russian, who have both left the old system behind, feel a natural sympathy with one another. The Soviet Union stands in relation to the rest of the world today

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very much as the United States stood for a century after the Revolution.

I felt far closer to the young engineers in my cabin with whom I could hardly exchange a word than with the English people with whom I ate.

III. Leningrad Theaters

THE first impression of Leningrad is absolutely dreamlike and dazing.

If one has never seen a really backward country, if one knows only the western European countries, one can form no real idea beforehand of what Russia and the Russians are like; and outside the Soviet Union, one can have had no experience of socialism. It is probably impossible for an American—it was impossible for me at any rate—to imagine Russia correctly. Before he goes there, he is likely to feel, as I had done with the young engineers, the affinities between Russians and Americans; and if he is an advocate of socialism and a reader of "U.S.S.R. in Construction," he is likely to imagine the Soviet Union as simply the United States plus his ideal of socialism.

Actually, the Soviet Union is not like that at all. My own first impression of Leningrad was of something totally unfamiliar. It is impossible to realize till one gets there what a shock it is to find a city where there are not, as there are in other countries, well-dressed people on the principal streets; all the people on all the streets seem to be dressed about the same, and they are all very badly dressed—or rather, they are dressed drably. The men are bareheaded or wear caps; the women very rarely wear colors, and they are invariably walking in flat soles, shoes or sneakers or slippers. They are not noisy like the crowds

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in America and to an American this makes them seem unreal. They move quietly and, compared to Americans, slowly; and the background of old St. Petersburg sets them off in a peculiar fashion. These dingy and mute and monotonous hordes inhabit a city of wide boulevards that seem the thoroughfares of an empire and of enormous public buildings and palaces that give an illusion of going on for miles. (Leningrad is, I suppose, the only city in Europe which does not look small when one comes to it after the American cities. It hasn't the high buildings of New York, but an inordinate horizontal extension.) From these mansions, the nobility have vanished; and—what is unimaginable to an American—in the offices and the shops there is no more business class. And past the shabby palaces, along the straight interminable streets, the crowds move like slow floods of water—not straining, not anxious like our people, not pitted against an alien environment, but as if the whole city belonged to them, as if they could make use of all its facilities and feel at ease in any part of it.

I went to the opera the first night and had an impression equally novel and equally powerful. The opera was Verdi's "Othello." I was unable to see that it had been given very much of a Marxist interpretation, though I suppose the black-and-white situation has something to do with its popularity.

The people in the theater were better dressed than the people one saw in the streets, but they were not, as they are at the Metropolitan, a small group of the privileged and rich: they were the same people in better clothes. And they had come because they wanted to hear the opera. I can't remember ever witnessing anywhere else curtain-calls so prolonged and enthusiastic.

During the long intermissions, they eat sandwiches, cakes and

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tea in large restaurants inside the theater. A Russian theater is built for social life and is comfortable and agreeable in a way which is entirely unknown on Broadway. The audience at the opera, instead of jostling and squeezing like an American crowd, walk slowly around the lobby, all going in the same direction and all moving at the same pace in the stream. And above them stands a statue of Lenin, one of the most effective in Leningrad, the right arm and hand outstretched and in the eyes a look both piercing and genial, at once as if he were giving back to labor what it had made and inviting it to share for the first time in its heritage of human culture, and as if he were opening out to humanity as a whole a future of which for the first time they were to recognize themselves the masters, with the power to create without fear whatever they had minds to imagine.

Leningrad is dramatic and rather sinister. The Orthodox Church and the Petersburg Court were monstrosities in themselves, and their corpses are peculiarly uncanny.

St. Isaac's Cathedral, with its hard and dark magnificence of gold and lapis lazuli and malachite, is in itself an uncomfortable place; but, turned into an anti-religious museum, it becomes a veritable Chamber of Horrors. The Russians, with their wonderful theatrical sense, have staged, in the interests of reason, an exhibition arrestingly dramatic. In the middle of the church is a gigantic pendulum illustrating Foucault's experiment to show that the earth revolves. It hangs from the remote dizzy dome clear down to the smooth stone pavement, on which has been painted a map of the world. The caretaker sets it swinging along a line that bisects the map, and then points out that in a few seconds it is seen to be cutting the line on a bias, deviating more and more as it is tilted by the movement of the earth. Gradually, silently, relentlessly, to the destruction of the Ortho-

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dox astronomy, it marks the revolution of the planet. And from this the visitor is led to apply a scientific criticism to the traditions and mysteries of the Church. Two hollow-eyed formless corpses which seem to be molded of earth are exposed side by side in glass cases. One is the body of a sainted metropolitan who was supposed to perform miraculous cures, the other the body of a chieftain of a small Siberian tribe. They are seen to be equally well preserved, and it is suggested to the peasant visitor that in both cases the mummification has been the result of climate and soil. All around is a horrifying gallery of the nightmares and frauds and delusions of religion—from the bugaboo devils of the Buddhists to the unfulfilled millennial prophecies of the American Seventh-Day Adventists.

The Winter Palace is a big low building with what must once have been a very handsome yellow and white eighteenth century façade; but it covers such an immense extent of ground that it exceeds eighteenth century measure. It looks disused because the paint is scaling off, and it does not get repainted. In general, the treasures which you are shown inside combine costliness, elaborateness and ornateness with a strange boorish and Byzantine taste. There is a music-box as big as an organ with cylinders like thick lengths of log; and there is a great golden cage of mechanical birds, as large as a real aviary, which Catherine the Great gave to Potemkin. They are set going at regular intervals to the wonder of the sightseeing proletariat—who crowd around the cage in a tight mute mass while, to the tinkle of a little tune of bells, a golden rooster crows and a big golden peacock unfolds his tail and, turning slowly around, displays it. Even the Hermitage seems to me the clumsiest of the great picture galleries: vast chambers plastered to the ceiling with Rubenses and Frans Snyders and Rembrandts, hung too close together and many of them too high, to be seen.

There is a Museum of the Revolution in the other side of

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the Winter Palace, with some very effective waxwork tableaux. Going into one of the rooms, you find yourself walking up to an official of the old regime sitting behind a desk, with his scanty beard, his pince-nez, his uniform and his braid. He is a lifelong denizen of offices, secure behind his doors and his desk, through whose hands the misery and revolt of the people passes in the form of papers; the figure is not caricatured so much that you may not at first take it for real. On the table before him lie the police records, albums of political suspects, whose faces contrast with his own: fierce, naked and concentrated. One of the albums is open to the police photos and red-ink identifications of V. I. Ulyanov and N. K. Krupskaya, arrested in 1895 and 1898 respectively for their activities in organizing the working-class. Lenin is slumped down in his coat, he is without either tie or collar and his hair is sticking out around his ears; he has already his high wide dome, but his eyes, although already stubborn, seem still rather open and wide apart, they have not been brought to their later intense focus. He has the look—a kind of look which we never find in his later photographs—of a young intellectual, a young idealist, who is recoiling from a collision with the authorities. Krupskaya, with her *gamine's* head, her full mouth, her short hair, her scornful eyes, is like a dagger of defiant pride. Both are young people forced from their student days to make decisions and to act, to live out whole lives of thought, political organization, prison, before they are out of their twenties.

I got lost in the somber old labyrinth with a pretty little girl guide from the Caucasus who had only just come up to Lenin-grad and had never been in the museum before. We wandered through desolate stone corridors full of formidable-looking closed doors. I had asked to see the Tsar's apartments, but she did not know where they were. Occasionally we would run into an old woman who would laconically misdirect us. When we

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would venture to open a door and find only another darkish chamber inhabited by waxwork dummies, the little guide would cry: "Oh, it is so gloo-my! I am afraid!" Once, after going out of the building and trying it again through a new entrance, we looked up and saw a colossus towering over us, a gigantic effigy of a worker, made for some celebration but now standing in the empty hallway with arm and clenched fist upraised and with staring epileptic eyes. As we passed by the inside windows, we could see little children in pink pinafores playing in the vast empty court. At one point, we became involved in a whole series of waxwork groups which represented conspirators in dark hideouts and prisoners in Siberian camps. The little girl became more and more frightened and asked if she could take my arm.

At last, through still a third entrance, we penetrated to the Tsar's apartments. First, there was an enormous bathroom—very queer: it made the little guide laugh. There was a deep tub sunk in the floor and a great stove to heat the water. In the tub was a long-handled instrument, which the little girl began to play with, wondering what it was for; the old woman who had charge of things came and stopped her. But upstairs we were very much surprised to find only a small suite of tiny rooms. There were the desk at which the Tsar had worked, the army cot on which he slept, some ugly nineteenth-century furniture, curiously drab and middle-class, some paintings by one of his daughters of models in picturesque costumes, and some photographs, now fading to brownish yellow, not interesting, not beautiful in themselves, but evidently of places that they'd been to and liked. He had had something like agoraphobia and had huddled up there in his tight little corner, where he had tried to make sure there was nothing which anyone could get under or behind.

In the Peter-Paul Fortress, you see Church and State side by

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side: the church with its golden altar, its columns with golden capitals, its white marble tombs of the tsars with their heavy gold crosses on top of them, right next door to the deep-walled prison from which nobody had ever escaped, where the guards always wore soft shoes so as not to be heard in the corridors and where men were shut up to go mad in dark rooms; where a woman revolutionist had once killed herself by soaking her hair in kerosene from her lamp and then setting fire to it; where Kropotkin had rapped out for the man in the next cell the history of the Paris Commune; and where the mother of Lenin had come to see his elder brother, sentenced to death for conspiracy against the Tsar, and had talked to him through two rows of bars. This was the imperial chapel where the tsars had gone regularly to service. The prisoners had heard the bells.

When I visited this church, there was a teacher explaining it to a group of children. She showed them the row of tombs with the big golden crosses on their covers, and told them that the Tsar had been appointed to rule, not because he was a man of ability, but simply because he had happened to be the son of a certain other man.

I had a letter to a literary man in Leningrad and went to VOKS to find out how to reach him. At VOKS, they had a long consultation, and then, instead of giving me his address, they told me he was to be found at that moment in the room of a visiting German writer who was stopping at my hotel. I immediately went back and called the room, but nobody answered the phone, so I had the porter leave a note. I had considerable difficulty in accomplishing even so much as this, as it happened that the first name of the literary man, whom we will call Mr. S., was the same as the last name of a man whom I did

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not know at all but who had at first been assigned to the same room as I. The Intourist girls were fatally attracted toward the idea that I wanted to get in touch with this man and would half-shut their eyelids trying to grasp it.

I heard nothing more from this note, so, after the theater, I tried to get the desk to call the German writer's room. A tall well-dressed man with spectacles and a shaved head, who looked as if he might be a German, asked me whether I were looking for Herr B. I answered that this was the case and asked whether he were Herr B. I understood him to say that he was, and a short conversation followed, in which he explained that he had no idea where Comrade S. was at the moment, and presently remarked, "I'm not Herr B. My name is T.," naming a well-known Russian writer. I said that I knew who he was, and we talked about a translation of one of his books which had attracted some attention in America; and finally he disappeared.

I heard nothing further that night from either Comrade S. or Herr B.; but in the middle of the next afternoon I had a call from Comrade S. on the telephone. Just as we were about to make an appointment, we were cut off, and, though I waited for some time in my room, I received no further call.

The next morning I tried to phone him. Somebody had written out his number for me, but in such a way that one of the digits looked as much like an 8 as a 9. The Intourist girl was sure it was 8; but the 8 number was always busy, so I had her try the number with 9. This number did not answer. In the afternoon, I tried again. The 8 number was now out of order. The girl thought it was 8 or nothing, but I made her try the 9 again, and sure enough the 9 was his number, and he himself answered the phone. He said, "You are a hard man to get!"

We made an appointment for 6 that afternoon, and at that hour he promptly appeared. He seemed to me energetic and practical and was dressed in square-cut clothes like an Ameri-

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can; yet when we tried to make another appointment, we were dissolved in confusion again. I at first understood him to ask me whether I had anything to do for the next evening; but it seemed to turn out a little later that it was that night that he wanted to take me around. I tried to pin him down to one or the other: "Today or tomorrow?" I asked. "Today is tomorrow," he seemed to answer. I attacked the problem again, but found my own steadiness shaken by the strange shifting currents of this unknown world. The base of the conversation had been English, but with a sprinkling of other languages: "Today, *heute, hier!*" I exclaimed. "*Aujourd'hui,*" he suggested. And finally, just when I thought we had it nailed at 8 o'clock that evening, he quickly and recessively added, as if things were getting too definite: "Or 9, if you would like better!"

I tell this story because it is typical of a certain aspect of Russia. Americans who have decided, as I had done, that Americans and Russians are much alike, discover that in the ordinary technique of life their habits are antipodally different. It is not merely a question of language difficulties or of bad telephone service. It is the native indisposition of Russians to be punctual, to be final, to be precise. Americans settle on a program, check it up and carry it out. Russians, even when they do what they have decided, do it without the settling and checking which seem indispensable to us. And they never do anything right away. Furthermore, they have an oriental reluctance to say anything disappointing, which is likely to lead to trouble when they promise things they cannot perform—as Comrade T., whom I met in the lobby, allowed me to think at first he was Herr B.

Americans, when they first arrive in Russia, usually become very much exasperated, and consider it an inexplicable miracle that Five-Year Plans are ever carried out.

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The Red Flag Textile Factory. It is an old one and dreary enough; nor do the workers look very much different from textile workers in other countries. But they have things that our workers do not have: radio concerts, for example, and an hour off for lunch. It was lunch-time, and in one of the aisles two girls were practicing ballet; through the window I saw another couple pirouetting and bending in the yard. Almost all the girls had had their hair done in beauty parlors. An old woman was sitting at a table, her head sunk down in her arms.

There is pressure, but nothing in the least like our fiendish American pressure. They are organized in work brigades, each with a chief, whom they elect. The brigades compete; and the winners get special privileges: theater tickets, longer vacations, their photographs, in the case of the girls, posted up in prominent places. The names of the ones who are not up to scratch are posted for public ignominy. At the end of each of the aisles is a blackboard with the names of the persons working there and the amount of work each has done. It was the system of Robert Owen at New Lanark.

The skilled workers are paid more than the unskilled. They work seven hours a day—except the men in the drying-room, who work only six hours. Disagreeable work earns special privileges. It is the system of Fourier. It is strange to find these devices of the early nineteenth-century idealists made the ordinary practice of modern industry.

Here you see them making the simple and rather inelegant clothes which the people wear on the streets. But they are beginning now to have colored shirts, bright dresses, and fancy ties.

I was walking home from the theater with M. D., an American friend. We crossed the Nevsky Prospekt at the wrong time and place, and heard voices exclaiming behind us, apparently

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instructing or rebuking us, from the people lined up waiting on the curb. One man, my companion told me, was calling out that we were "badly educated" and followed us, threatening and scolding. But the other people, seeing that we were foreigners headed for the Europa Hotel, told him he was drunk and called him off. You get fined if the police catch you crossing in the wrong place; but I suppose that in the attitude of these people there was "proletarian discipline" involved—something we haven't got in America. At home, we will all beat the rules if we can: if the police don't stop us, nothing will.

M. D. had been very eager to see what Meyerhold had done with "Camille"; and having heard of the proletarian interpretation which old plays were given in Russia and especially of Meyerhold's bold innovations, she had not been at all surprised when she was confronted, before the curtain went up, with two sailors who came out to meet one another from opposite sides of the stage, exchanged greetings and heartily shook hands. Nor was she disturbed when, instead of a Paris salon, the curtain revealed the deck of a ship; nor when it turned out that the lady of the gardenias was some sort of woman sailor who had not merely a handful of lovers but literally a whole crew. She told me that she supposed there were factions among the lovers: those who loved her because she could talk and those who loved her because she could listen, those who loved her because they thought she was virtuous and those who loved her because they thought she was wanton, etc. At the end, instead of dying of consumption, the Camille of Meyerhold seemed to be shot down on deck with her shoes on. M. D., on her way out, discovered that what she had been seeing was a play called "The Optimistic Tragedy," presented not by Meyerhold but by Tairov at the Kamerny and dealing

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with the adventures of a woman commissar in the Baltic fleet during the Civil Wars.

One arrives prepared for anything in the theater; but the period of extravagant Marxist distortion seems to be pretty well over now.

I met some of the young pupils of Eisenstein who had been sent on a tour for general culture. One of them, clean-cut and alert, in a faultless double-breasted blue suit, told with a great deal of mirth of how he had gotten into the Winter Palace without paying, on the pretense of being a member of a workers' delegation which was just entering when he came along. When they found out the truth, they put him out and made him come in again properly. The commissar's wife, who had translated, concluded: "And he thinks that's funny!"

I was taken to the opening of an historical play made by Alexey Tolstoy from his novel "Peter the First." It was done in a magnificent theater, all imperial gold and white and with a box all in gold for the Tsar. The production was the most gorgeous I have ever seen: they evidently believe that the small amount of dye which they can spare the foreign currency to invest in will go further if it is used for scenery and costumes. And in general they try to make up for the meagerness of some aspects of their lives by lavish expenditure on the theater.

It was by way of being an official occasion. The President of the Leningrad Soviet was there, a short man with a formidable black beard; and so was Alexey Tolstoy. The Leningrad writers attended in a body and had a section especially reserved for them.

The first scene showed Peter in the shipyard working at the

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forge himself, despite the gibes of the old-fashioned persons who told him that was no place for a tsar. I got the impression even so early as this that some modern application was intended; and as the scenes of the chronicle unfolded, I became rather uncomfortably certain of it. Finally, my companion whispered: "Here certain historical parallels begin!" Tolstoy had rewritten his play in order to bring it up to date; and every incident seemed to have a counterpart in recent political events. I imagined that Peter's mustache got larger as the play proceeded. There was a scene in the Peter-Paul Fortress in which Peter comes to see his reactionary son whom he has had imprisoned for conspiring against him; he speaks a few words of stern tenderness over the young man limp from the torture: "After all, you were my son—I loved you!" Then, "Let him be executed!" When the curtain went down, there was tense silence. Peter is making the people learn to dance just as the present administration is. In the last scene, betrayed by his wife, he exclaims that all his work has come to nothing from the disloyalty of those in whom he trusted. What is he to do? "Blood and steel! Blood and steel! I can't execute everybody!" He bids the people be gay, and they strike up a minuet. But the gigantic man with the boots and the mustache turns his back on them and folds his arms and stands looking out the French window. Then the lights in the foreground go out, and you see only the silhouettes of the dancers dominated by the towering black figure in outline against the panes. Peter is thus left in tragic grandeur; but it was also, one reflected, rather hard on the dancers who had to enjoy themselves by command in the presence of that ominous shadow. One remembered the young men and girls in the dining-room of the Hotel Europa performing so carefully and slowly the dance-steps they had so recently learned.

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A Russian said to me afterwards, apropos of "Peter the First": "Stalin has sometimes been criticized as not having distinguished himself as a Marxist. He wants to show that he is capable of historical analogies."

Leaning against the parapet of the Neva, talking in the night still white amid the desolate long perspectives. The dark palace of the Grand Duke Constantine, uncle of the late Tsar, who had, I was told, been "quite a good poet"—he had signed himself C. R. and had been executed after the Revolution. The Square of the Victims of the Revolution—"so quiet here you could sleep."

M. D. had an extra ticket for the ballet and invited one of the Intourist interpreters to go with her. The girl said at first that she couldn't because she didn't have the clothes; and when M. D. persuaded her and she went, she wouldn't go out and walk around in the intermissions because she said she wasn't fit to be seen.

I told M. D. one day about the English people on the boat and their troubles with the Russian food. She said that an Englishman she had seen when she had stopped in England on her way had been worried because he had heard that you couldn't get cream in Russia and had tried to persuade her to take along with her a machine for making cream out of melted butter.

He was tall, slim and pale in his uniform, talked English beautifully and wrote poetry in French, and was cultivated in every language on every conceivable subject, as only a Russian intellectual can be. And he manipulated his cigarette with in-

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sinuating conscious grace. He was an instructor in Methodology at the Naval Academy and had been reading Donne's poetry to the sailors: he said they were crazy about it. He told us about a poem by a Russian, written, he said, partly under French, partly under German, influence, which invested the raising of Lazarus with homosexual suggestions. I was surprised when he began to tell us how wonderful "Chapaev" was, how nobody but a Russian could understand it.

—Looking and losing oneself out the window of the electric-lighted room in the day still light outside—an old woman sewing in the doorway of a great battered yellow stucco building above the cobbled street—behind, you had almost forgotten the telephone on the desk, the gold sphinxes and goddesses and cupids on the furniture of brown polished wood.

—Where are you? In a theatrical director's office which is also a place full of elegance, in which people come and go who would be interesting if you could understand them better. This uneasy and magical daydream at night is St. Petersburg, Lenin-grad.

The fables of Pushkin, when we hear of them abroad, have little significance for us, and the music of Chaikovsky is perhaps never really good except in Russia. Meyerhold has made of "The Queen of Spades" a disturbing and fascinating drama. He has had the libretto rewritten and has rearranged the score—most of the old operas ought probably to be rewritten—so as to give it new point and suspense. The old Countess who knows the secret of winning at cards is not introduced in the first scene, as in the ordinary version of the opera: we only hear about her. Nor do we see her even when Hermann goes to her house: we only hear her voice calling. When she finally appears, she is terrifying: an inscrutable and queenly old mummy who sits as

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mute as Fate while a sort of *commedia dell' arte* of pantaloons and harlequins and shepherdesses is performed for her entertainment. When it is finished, she silently rises and goes. The bedroom scene is terrific. She has been sitting in her *négligé* and singing a little song in French about a visit to Versailles in her youth. Hermann suddenly appears from the closet, with his green, burning-eyed sleepless face and, threatening her with a pistol, tries to force her to tell him the secret; but the fright is too much for her: she falls dead. The scene ends with harsh satisfying trumpets. Hermann and the Countess's companion stand by the parapet of the Neva: she discovers that he has never loved her but only used her to gain access to the old lady. The Countess's ghost appears to Hermann and finally tells him the secret. He goes back to the card-table, and once he wins. But he disregards the old woman's warning: he tries the trick a second time and loses. The Queen of Spades turns into the Countess and winks at him malignly; and he ends in the insane asylum.

What has Pushkin put into this story? the foreigner asks himself. The ironic tragedy of the will that tries to cheat on the rules of life? Where did the old Countess get her secret? From experience, and she knew that she must not abuse it. All this passes under the gallantry, the champagne, the card-playing of a Petersburg winter. A poor officer has gone mad.

—Afterwards we drank vodka in little cut-glass goblets and ate iced caviare.

And I went to bed full of vodka and Pushkin—outside the high windows, the long curtains, the sky was still pale with unfading day . . . on a table there were a cut-glass decanter with a curious high square stopper and full of water that hadn't been changed for days, and I saw it as if it were standing in the room in which Hermann had lain awake, brooding, desiring, scheming . . . they had always stayed up all night, drinking and talking and dancing . . . and about them the vast sprawling

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city with the bottomless spaces behind it . . . the palaces full of spaces, the broad river, the waterways . . . the bridges, the characters of Dostoevsky, uneasy, unable to relax in sleep, roaming the bridges in the half-day of night: the dissipated, the lonely, the thoughtful, the poor . . . the great unintegrated city which in itself seemed to make no meaning, in which the individual had to make his own meaning, in which he despaired by himself, beating his head against the spaces . . . away there on the outskirts of Europe . . . they had come back as we had done at home to a straggling provincial civilization among prairies and wild rivers and forests, bringing books and manners from Europe, and they had remained in bed in the morning for hours, like Goncharov's Oblomov, trying to make up their minds whether or not to get up: I had done the same thing myself . . . in those countries we are freer, less certain of what we want, we think the long, long thoughts of the poem and they are lost in the quiet of the province . . . unless, all alone in the spaces, we are possessed by some passionate purpose: we never know what we have got in the forests and wastes of those countries; we never know what is going to come out of them. . . .

IV. On the Margin of Moscow

I WENT to the station with the Englishman from the boat, who said that the food was all right, but he couldn't get enough fruit and green vegetables.

In the train, they told us to watch our suitcases, not to leave them alone a second.

I "traveled hard," which is much more comfortable than the second and third class compartments in the western European

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countries. In those, you have to sit up all night; but in Russia you have a bunk to lie down in, and if there isn't one, you can't buy a ticket. For five rubles, you get a small mattress and a pillow and a blanket.—The man in the berth above me—a heavy body, an inchoate face and some kind of official-looking cap—flopped in his clothes without a mattress and apparently never moved all night.

I bought beer and slices of bread with pressed caviare, sausage and cheese, from a man who came round with a basket, and I drank the beer with a passenger who knew a few words of English and who had helped me to talk to the man. The passenger was a tall, stooping fellow, with childlike eyes and a walrus mustache. He told me that he was a Pole and that he had worked eleven years in Detroit, had drawn five dollars a day at Ford's. I asked him why he had come to Russia, and he replied: "I t'ink I'm crazy!" I said that Detroit was in a bad way and that he might not have his job there now. He told me, with some satisfaction, I could see, that he was making two hundred and seventy-five rubles a month, pretty good pay for the Soviets. He spoke with great pride of the new Moscow subway and said that I would see nothing like it in America. One thing he was sure of, he said: he would never go back to Poland.

I ate the slice of bread spread with caviare, leaning on a kind of little shelf and looking out the window, absorbed by a totally new landscape: forests of slim straight pines and birches with fine white stems; this part of Russia is hirsute. Log-houses like America and not like Europe. I kept on sitting up, waiting for it to be dark, as you do—till I realized it was getting on toward midnight.

I had originally proposed to go from Leningrad to Moscow by day in order to see the country, but everybody told me this was impossible. Their accents seemed to suggest that such a

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thing had never been imagined. I inquired of a literary man in Leningrad who knew a good deal about a good many other things, what there was between Leningrad and Moscow, and why people never made the journey by day. He replied that he did not know. "It has never occurred to me," he said, "to wonder who the people are who live between Leningrad and Moscow. I don't know who they are or what they do."

This seemed to me a singular point of view, but when I asked other people about it, I couldn't find anyone else who knew either. Everybody took it for granted. At last, I came upon the explanation in my antiquated Russian grammar. "From St. Petersburg to Moscow," says the grammar in one of its exercises, "the locomotive runs for a distance of 400 miles, almost as the crow flies, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left. For fifteen hours the passenger in the express train looks out on forest and morass, and rarely catches sight of human habitation. Only once he perceives in the distance what may be called a town; it is Tver, which has been thus favored simply because it happened to be near the straight line. And why was the railway constructed in this extraordinary fashion? For the best of all reasons, because the Tsar so ordered it. When the preliminary survey was being made, Nicholas learned that the officers intrusted with the task (and the Minister of Ways and Roads in the number) were being influenced more by personal than by technical considerations, and he determined to cut the Gordian knot in true imperial style. When the Minister laid before him the map with the intention of explaining the proposed route, he took a ruler, drew a straight line from the one terminus to the other, and remarked in a tone that precluded all discussion, 'You will construct the line so.' And the line was so constructed."

Therefore, there is no place which is important to stop at; therefore, the trip is always made at night.

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It is characteristic of the Russians that the railroad should have been built in this way; and it is also characteristic of them that people who travel on it frequently should neither know nor wonder about it.

I had expected Moscow to be old and musty, but it is modern and energetic. The people are better dressed and more prosperous-appearing, in general, than the people in Leningrad. The main business section, the "Center," is much like an American city. They have set out to rearrange the whole place, and already there are only little patches of the original Moscow of the Muscovite Tsars embedded in drab streets and crowded traffic: the jewel-box of the Kremlin with its needle-pointed gleaming gilt spires (which, since the Kirov shooting, visitors are not allowed to see); the shabby domes of St. Basil's in their big ugly bulbous mushroom-clump. St. Basil's, inside, is a labyrinth, lined with faded saints and angels which the authorities have done nothing to freshen, and plastered with aggressively glaring texts from Marx and Engels and Lenin which declare that religion is a fraud. Outside, the millions of stubby little people who have been flocking into the metropolis but who are not used to getting around in a city, are plunging about and bumping into one another. Moscow seems even to a New Yorker a terribly exhausting place. The tram-cars are usually crowded, and the people hang on to the outside and fall off and get under the cars and have their legs and arms run over. And though the pace of Russian life is in general so much slower and less effortful than ours, their new mechanical means of locomotion seem sometimes to go to their heads. They rip around the streets in their Russian-made cars tooting wild defiant horns, like galloping Cossacks; and the escalators in their new little subway rush the passengers up and down at a speed unknown in any American city. Women and children scream: a first ride

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is a major adventure. When the subway was opened, Comrade Stalin, who can take it, rode the escalator twice in succession.

The subway in Moscow is worth thinking about. They are all very much excited over it, and they ask every foreigner how it compares with the subways in other countries. The truth is, of course, that, compared to most of them, it is tiny; but it is the only *pretty* subway in the world. Every station is in a different style, so that it is full of delightful surprises, like a superior sort of scenic railway: there are murals, ornamental columns, novel effects of light. Even the trains are done in pleasing combinations of red, light tan and yellow, or red, light tan and green. What it most resembles, on its smaller scale, is the interiors of the Radio City movie theaters. The moral of the Moscow subway is that there is no reason why a public utility, if really built by the people for their use, should not have everything that is possible to give it to make it dignified, handsome and attractive.

I sometimes wake up in the morning with a feeling I have never had before of being obliged to adjust myself to a new set of social dimensions.

They are certainly much pleasanter with each other, for all their jostling and jamming, than New Yorkers. They have arguments on street-cars and in queues, always calling one another "Comrade"—quite different from our crowds in the subway, for example, where the people rarely speak to one another, each penned up in his particular anxieties, each with his particular schedule to make. In Moscow, if anyone behaves hoggishly, there is general remonstrance and protest. In one case I heard

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of, a man in a street-car was made to feel so cheap that he got off.

It is much easier to establish friendly relations with Russians than with the people of any other country I know. When you smile at them, they always smile back: it is a queer kind of childlike responsiveness. When they are frightened or suspicious, they become not stiff, but simply shy.

Old women walking along the streets with cigarettes drooping out of their mouths. They have been getting more cigarettes lately.

I was taken to a commissar's home to tea. He and his family were living in what would be for New York a very moderate-sized middle-class apartment. Lots of interesting sweet things to eat: cranberries candied in white sugar, for example. The Russians love these sweets and are only just beginning to get them again. The Commissar had the Communist seriousness, reticence, intentness, severity. Over tea in the bosom of his family, he almost never smiled—though he was evidently not unamiable and, from behind his rather heavy manner, was evidently going to be helpful in the case of some unfortunate person in whose behalf one of the visitors had come to appeal to him.

They tried to tell me the news that Roosevelt's N.R.A. had been declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court; but, little confidence though I had in the N.R.A., I was so unprepared for this, subconsciously no doubt so loth to admit it, that I thought they said *constitutional*. They had apparently been surprised and had expected that I should be surprised.—It was only the next day, when I read about it in the paper, that I grasped it.

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It is curious losing track of the days of the week. Their week consists now of six days, with a holiday called "Free Day" on the sixth. Everything is reckoned by the date; and I believe I miss the old Saturdays and Mondays. Each of the traditional days has its own special psychological atmosphere, the week is a moral cycle.

We went up to a traffic-cop, and I was astonished when she turned around and was a little, red-cheeked, freckled country girl, very serious, concentrated and cute, in her helmet and masculine clothes.

It is unexpected and stimulating for an American, after leaving the writers at home preoccupied with what they imagine to be the Soviet point of view about literature, to find the Russians studying intently everything that reaches them from the States, rather dissatisfied now with their own post-revolutionary literature and seeming to feel that in America we have been able to do the kind of thing which they would like to do themselves. Very amusing to reflect that the three living American writers most popular in the Soviet Union—Upton Sinclair, Dos Passos and Dreiser—are all people who have recently been in wrong with the literary Communists at home.

Hemingway has just been translated and, among the intelligentsia, is attracting a great deal of attention. I come to realize that the young people in Russia are interested in the American writers for certain reasons, among others, which I hadn't before been aware of. I was told by a Russian that the hero and heroine of Dos Passos's "Manhattan Transfer," both types of the unquiet intellectual, were as well known in Russia as characters in Pushkin, that young men would say, "I am Jimmy Herf," etc. The young Russians of the Jimmy Herf type have this in common with these characters of Dos Passos's: that they are

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up against a social machine to which they have difficulty adapting themselves. That the Soviet machine has a more rational base and a nobler aim than American business does not always make the situation easier—and, after all, the conditions of a democracy, with their tendency to lower cultural standards, present the same kind of problems to both.

And there must be people in Moscow who would sometimes be glad of “a clean bright place,” like the man in Hemingway’s story—a story which, I note, has been included in the Russian selection from his work. I am reminded of a young woman who tells me that she dreams about having a room to herself.

An air-meet. It took place on the outskirts of Moscow, and we reached it along a road lined with little old mud-brown log houses which had fancy peaked cornices over the windows and fringes of wooden lace. Some of them seemed to have sunk into the earth till their windows were almost level with the ground.

It was on this field that the crowds were trampled to death at the coronation of Nicholas II. Today there is a loud-speaker and a band playing “The International” through it.—Ballet-patterns by gliders, which would sheer off symmetrically from the plane that had trailed them and wheel slowly over on their sides; a regular rocket-burst of parachute-jumpers, some of the women coming down with two parachutes.—The weather was cold and wet: a little group of girls and young men had joined hands and were running around in a ring to keep warm. There were appealing little boy and girl couples leaning against their bicycles and looking up at the flyers.

A small policeman in a helmet was trying to make the people get back behind a rope. They argued with him about it, calling him “Comrade.” The crowd maintained that so long as there were cars parked in front of the rope, people ought to be able

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to stand there. The policeman, on his side, pointed out that, so far as seeing aeroplanes went, it didn't matter where you stood. Somebody said that it wasn't that you couldn't see: it was the psychological effect of having something in front of you. The policeman apparently felt the force of this, but he urged them to get back "a tiny bit." Presently, the cars drove away, and the policeman then returned and showed logically that, now that the obstruction was removed, they ought to keep back behind the ropes. And, persuaded by this argument, they complied.

The relations between the police and the public seem almost ideal. Lenin insisted on having the former called "militia." The rôle of the old police had become so hateful to him that he did not want to preserve even the name. The "militia," like any other militia, were supposed to represent the citizens themselves; and it is true that on an occasion like this air-meet, the Moscow militia are more like the ushers at a college ball-game than like the police of the capitalist states. I afterwards saw a man arrested, and the same sort of parliamentary methods seemed to regulate the proceedings. Two militiamen had the man by the arms, but he kept stopping and arguing with them. They would unhand him and explain their case. Finally, they led him away.

There are, of course, the secret police, who are apparently a different matter.

I haven't been troubled by espionage as some people complain of being—though I have had one or two mysterious telephone calls which woke me up at early hours of the morning. When I went, there would be nobody on the line; and I was told that this was the ordinary way of finding out whether you were sleeping at the address you had given. Once when I was taking a Russian lady home from the Metropole café, we were

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followed very closely by a man who seemed to have a special interest in us.

I always find that Americans who become bitter over espionage in Russia have never had any experience of what may happen in the United States in any industrial center. These people have never been made uncomfortable at home, because they have never been suspected of supporting the interests of labor against the interests of the employing class. So I was not made uncomfortable in Russia, because I was a visiting journalist known to be sympathetic with the Soviet regime. In America, the visiting journalist whose sympathies are not known, though he may be merely reporting strikes or even merely looking at factories, soon finds the police and the officials checking up on his lodgings and his movements; and in the ruder and more remote communities, he is likely to be confronted with gun-thugs who threaten to run him out of town. If he is known to be engaged in pro-labor work, he may be followed on the train by a detective and very likely *will* be run out of town.

I locked myself out of my room at the hotel. There was no one at the chambermaid's table. The elevator-boy said he'd send the porter, but nothing came of this. I went downstairs and told the porter myself, and he immediately turned to a young boy who was standing across from the desk with a box of tools under his arm. I asked the porter whether he didn't have a key: they had opened it that way before. But he insisted that the boy would attend to it. I went upstairs with the boy, who produced from his kit a large wedge and began hammering it, with deafening racket, into the crack between the double doors. Presently he abandoned this and, taking out another huge tool, began to gouge it into the keyhole. Then he tried the wedge again. He evidently had nothing for locks. An old man with a

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shaved head had turned up at the chambermaid's table. I told him that they had a key there with which they had gotten into my room before; but he only opened his drawer and looked at the keys and shook his head. I remonstrated with the boy, who was easily persuaded to stop. And the old man and I, seizing two different phones simultaneously, made simultaneous attempts to get the porter, but nobody answered from below. The boy and I went downstairs and found the porter behind his desk. He immediately produced a key, with which I immediately opened the door. His sending the boy in the first place had apparently been due merely to the accident that the latter happened to be standing by with a box of tools for breaking into things and that it had seemed to the porter a pleasing idea to have him put them to use on my door. I had been trying to think that Moscow was much more efficient than Leningrad.

I am continually surprised at finding Russians who are crazy to go to America. I tell them there is a capitalist crisis there with many people out of work; but, though their own newspapers and official publicity are continually telling them the same thing, many people don't seem really to believe it. I have already been asked several times whether Roosevelt were not a great man—in spite of Stalin's admirable analysis of the impossibilities of the New Deal in his interview with H. G. Wells, which has been circulated here in Russian. It is partly of course because Roosevelt has recently recognized the Soviets; but it is also because there is still a tendency in all this part of the world to regard the United States as the Promised Land.

I spoke of this to an American Communist, who had been working in Moscow several years. Yes, he said, it was hard to explain to them: all the Americans they saw, even Communists, were a good deal better dressed than most Russians. When he

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spoke at meetings, he said, and tried to tell them about the depression, they would ask him, "But Communist literature isn't illegal in America?" "No." "Well, why isn't there a workers' revolution?" "Maybe you think that's an easy one to answer," he concluded. "I thought so at first, till I tried."

I also told him I was beginning to wonder whether the privileges and the chances to make money of the popular writers in Russia were really a good thing for their work, whether writers shouldn't always be at odds with society. He said that they had plenty of thorns in their flesh. They had to appear at workers' meetings—every factory has its literary circle—and justify what they were doing. "Very often they're told that they're lousy."—I tried to imagine how this would work out: it would be good education for the workers, but would it be good for the work of the writers?

I met my Englishman from the boat again on the steps of the Hotel National. When I told him I was hoping to stay several months, "You get along all right, do you?" he said. "*I* couldn't stand it!" The reason he thought he couldn't stand it was that he didn't get enough fresh fruit and vegetables. I said that you could get oranges, though they cost a lot. "I had an orange and a bottle of beer the other day," he replied, "so I was all right for a time." I thought of how amusing he had been about the complaints of the Englishmen in the Embassy. "Well, it's interesting to see it," I said, "isn't it?" He made no reply.

That same evening I went to "The Pickwick Club," a dramatization of "Pickwick Papers," in which the Russians, on their

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side, were making a (perhaps diplomatic) effort to understand and appreciate the English. It was not the very best I have seen them do in fidelity to the national color of foreign classics; and the English-speaking spectator did not quite know very often whether to be rubbed the wrong way or amused. Immediately after Mrs. Bardell's fainting-spell in the arms of Mr. Pickwick, the attorneys Dodson and Fogg popped up in grotesque and horrible make-ups which resembled the wizard Koshchey the Deathless in Dyagilev's "*Oiseau de Feu*" rather than the illustrations of Phiz; Mr. Pickwick and the other gentlemen were continually kissing each other as Russians do but Englishmen don't; and Mr. Wardle's great hall was decorated with a strange and mirth-provoking picture of a man in a red coat and shooting-cap with a ramshackle Russian grin, holding up a fox by the tail with the fingers of his hand extended like Ed Pinaud in the hair- tonic ads.—Yet it seemed to me that more study and imagination had gone into this production to make it English than had gone into, say, Jed Harris's "Uncle Vanya" in New York to reproduce the Russian atmosphere of Chekhov, and with more successful results.

The "Moscow tic": I hadn't believed it when I had been told that people always looked over their shoulders before venturing to say anything about politics. But they do, and I find that I do it, too.

I was taken to "Romeo and Juliet" at the Theater of the Revolution, the first classic that this theater has put on: they have been working on the production two years.

It was Shakespeare for the Komsomol. They had Romeo and Juliet and Mercutio and the Nurse leaping on and off balconies and running up and down stairs and hurling themselves

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into the audience, with the kind of energy required for parachute-jumping and tractor-driving. And the actors seemed to have been directed to break in on the spell of the balcony-scene from time to time by playing certain points for laughs. The director explained between the acts that this was "in the mood of Soviet youth": ironic, casual, tender; and really much closer to Shakespeare than the way it was usually played. Shakespeare had already made it sensual; and sentimentality with sensuality was intolerable. They are trying, it seems, to encourage love, but not too much romance. The whole tragedy seemed to go to show that young people subjected to their families' wills under the arrangements of the feudal system were a good deal less happy and free than Komsomols under the Soviets.

Yet there were in this production some extraordinary sets and an excellent Juliet and Nurse. And when I compared it with the "Romeo and Juliet" which I had seen before I left New York, I was doubtful whether it were not really true that the Russians had been closer to Shakespeare than such a production as the American one had been. They had certainly much more vitality. I remembered how I had gone to sleep while Katharine Cornell was sitting on the bed and thinking about taking the potion, more moved by the idea of a narcotic than by the passionate tides of young love; and how her deliberate, conscientious and wholly unprepared-for yell at the thought of Tybalt moldering in the tomb had most unpleasantly waked me up.

The Moscow "Romeo and Juliet" lasted from 7:30 to 12:20—the longest play I think I've ever sat through. They take the theater seriously in Russia, as no one has for years with us. They do not allow anybody to be seated from the moment the curtain goes up: they won't even let you into a movie once the picture has started. During the long intermissions, the people

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have tea and discuss the play. Even productions the Russians think inferior seem to me satisfactory in a way that our skimmed and hurried comedies and knocked-together revivals never are any more.

Many things that we apply ourselves to they slight. But a dinner, a play, a ballet, a meeting, a Russian lesson, an after-dinner conversation, are likely to go on for hours and to deal with the matter in hand far more thoroughly than we usually do.

They have dinner, their main meal, sometime between 3 and 6, and do much of their executive work at night, eating supper between 11 and 2. Stalin goes to bed every morning at 4. This is precisely what I do myself; but, although it is admirable for writing, I am not sure it is so good for administrative work. I should think the projects they draw up would tend to become works of the imagination.

An official from whom I was trying to get a permit promised encouragingly to expedite matters for me and told me to come around at 11 the next morning (offices never open before 10). When I came the next morning, he wasn't there; and I had to make several visits before I found him in the afternoon. He said that he was sorry to be so late, but that if I knew how the head of the department had sat up working till 2!—But, after all, in spite of these vigils, his subordinates had not been in their offices to carry on the business of the department.

This habit of having dinner in the middle of the afternoon is, it seems, an eighteenth-century institution. It is one of the many examples of things which wear for Westerners the aspect of antiquities coexisting with other things which the West hasn't caught up to yet.

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I found S. in her office eating large chocolate candies which were done up in colored paper wrappers with pictures of bears climbing trees and labeled in English, "Baby-Bears." With her small thick body, her broad paws, her childlike, round, brown eyes and her protrusive nose with its open nostrils, she looked rather like a little bear herself.

She is the daughter of a scientist of the old society, now in business of some kind in Egypt. She remembers being at school when the classes would be interrupted by the dropping of British bombs—she could see that the teacher was terribly worried; and the strain of trying to do homework when they had so little light. The food was so insufficient that her nails became disfigured from lack of calcium. Her parents left Russia: but S. stayed behind and made a place for herself in the new society. She had mastered English early, and she took a job as technical interpreter for one of the big economic conferences that worked up the Five-Year Plan. She says that it was very exciting, but that it brought her to the verge of a breakdown. Her sister would have to wake her up at night because she would still be interpreting in her sleep. Then the sister got away to join her parents in Egypt, but S. stuck by the Soviet Union. She has burned up some of the best years of her youth on work for the Five-Year Plan, and she is sometimes a little wistful about it. But the letters which she gets from her sister abroad seem to shock her sense of propriety—all the more perhaps because they make her a little envious: they are all about night-clubs and dances, she says; and all that kind of thing "is not to be compared with what is being done here." She is always impatient with people who are nostalgic about the old regime.

She is so far the Russian whom I have met that I like best and the only really attractive woman whom I have so far seen in Moscow. Also, the only one who knows how to dress. I thought at first that her clothes must have come from abroad, but it

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seems that she gets them in Moscow, which shows—though she makes more money than most women—that it is not altogether meager materials and the austerity of the post-revolutionary period which are to blame for the appearance of the Moscow women, but also lack of taste. They will have to be educated in taste as in so many other things.

I took S. to an old play of Ostrovsky's, "Talents and Admirers," at the Art Theatre. She changed in her office, before we went, to tiny little high-heeled shoes—she wears twos—and produced a pair of mother-of-pearl opera-glasses which she said had belonged to her mother. The play was marvelous: the Art Theatre has brilliantly succeeded in reproducing the effect of the mid-nineteenth-century *genre* pictures of the Tretyakov Gallery, so that the tableaux on the stage have the composition and color of paintings. And at the same time they have invested the characters with so perfect an illusion of life that you become totally unaware they are actors wearing period costumes and make-up and are unable to imagine them out of their rôles. S. translated for me with astonishing intelligence and fluency, and seemed deeply to appreciate the play. I don't think I have ever enjoyed theater-going more.

Men in uniforms whom you meet who tell you that you can talk to them freely because they do not represent the government.

Arkhangelskoye, the Yusupov estate: all sorts of statuary and paintings and furniture and panels and books brought from all over Europe to this remote magnificent house in this immense countryside which it dominated. The foliage of the slim-

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stemmed trees which seem to surround it for miles, making a screen both porous and dense, is of a peculiar light bright green which I have never seen anywhere else. It is the color and texture of Turgenev.

Today the following announcement appeared in *The Moscow Daily News*:

PLENUM OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE CPSU

INFORMATIONAL STATEMENT

The Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU held June 5 to 7, 1935, discussed two questions: 1) on the harvesting campaign and deliveries of agricultural products, and 2) on the personnel of the Secretariat of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR and on Comrade A. Yenukidze.

ON THE PERSONNEL OF THE SECRETARIAT OF THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE USSR AND ON COMRADE A. YENUKIDZE

RESOLUTION OF THE PLENUM OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF
THE CPSU ON THE REPORT OF YEZHOV, ADOPTED JUNE 7, 1935.

i. To approve the measures of the control organs for checking up and improving the personnel of the Secretariat of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR.

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2. For his political and personal dissoluteness, A. Yenukidze, former Secretary of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR, is to be removed from membership in the Central Committee of the CPSU and is to be excluded from the ranks of the CPSU.

This is all. Yenukidze has for seventeen years been secretary of the Central Executive Committee. His political dissoluteness is supposed to consist of leniency with political prisoners; his personal dissoluteness, of ballet-girls. There has been a rumor among the newspaper men around the Metropole Hotel, where he lived, that he was led through the lobby handcuffed. But no definite statements are made, and nobody knows anything for certain. We are likely to think at home that our newspaper publicity is a curse; but the Russians, with their policy of suppression, have gone too far in the other direction. A tourist told me that when she had asked a guide whether the Kremlin was where Stalin lived, the guide had replied: "Comrade Stalin is an employee of the government. His private life is none of our business, and we do not think about where he lives."—And charges never have to be substantiated to the satisfaction of public opinion. The result of this is that the Russian public make up tabloid journalism of their own. I have never heard more scandalous stories circulated about public figures than those that get whispered about in Moscow.

Only gradually you come to be aware of all the things that Moscow lacks. There are very few dogs and cats, for example. People haven't had room enough or food enough to keep many pets in the past. At one time they had to get food cards for dogs.

And Moscow does not even seem to have a special smell of its

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own like other European cities. This is partly, I suppose, because it is kept so uniformly clean: they are always playing the hose on the streets, and in all my wanderings through the city, I was never able to find anything like a slum or any quarter that even seemed dirty. But it is also partly due to the absence of so many things that have smells: foliage, for example, and perfumes; restaurants cooking rich foods and bars serving pungent liquor; fruit-stands in the street, incense in the churches, and the fumes of private motor-cars and taxis.

Visit to a small collective farm just outside Moscow. Getting started was no end of trouble. We had a little Komsomol girl guide with blond curly hair and a blue beret on one side of her head. First she thought it would be a good idea to take a bus which left every ten minutes, but then, on second thought, she decided the train would be quicker. When we got to the Warsaw Station, they told us at the Information Bureau that the train was just about to leave, so we hurried to the ticket-window. But then when our tickets had been paid for, they told her that Information was all wrong, because the train did not leave for three-quarters of an hour. We had come an immense distance from the bus terminus, so we decided to take a taxi. We tried to give back the tickets, but the woman wouldn't accept them: she said they had already been stamped, so that she could give us our money back only if somebody else came along who was going to the same station, in which case she could sell him our tickets. A long argument then took place between the guide and the woman at the window, a fresh-cheeked and clear-eyed little girl who kept smiling in the most friendly fashion. But we couldn't do anything with her. Finally, I took the change and shoved the tickets through the window, and we set out for the taxi-stand. This put the poor girl in a terrible dilemma, and we

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heard her calling after us and looked back and saw her leaning down and sticking her head out the ticket-window and trying to make us take the tickets.

We waited in line for a taxi, but when it finally came our turn and we told the driver where to go, he said that he couldn't take us out of town because he had to be back in the garage in half an hour to give the taxi to another man. Presently another one came up and said that he would take us out if we didn't stay there too long. "He says that he will wait half an hour," explained the guide. "That means he will wait an hour."

In the taxi, I talked to the young Englishman who was the only other member of the party. He was working in the Ministry of Agriculture and seemed to be pretty far to the left, but, like the Englishman on the boat, didn't seem to know where to come to roost. The little Komsomolka began to apply herself to an English translation of Engels's pamphlet, "Socialism, Utopian and Scientific," thus improving her English at the same time as her Dialectical Materialism. I had seen her before: she had taken me to the Women's and Children's Museum and had explained to me the fetuses in various stages and the birth control devices. She had been working hard at English and said that she especially admired—as I discovered all the students did, because it is given them as a reader, I suppose—"A Picture of Dorian Gray." Now she told me that she had finished her courses in Dialectical Materialism for the summer and was soon going for her vacation to a *dacha* (summer villa). I suppose she was doing this work for VOKS simply in order to be helpful and to have a chance to practice her English.

Rutted roads and mussy country. Old brown wood-lace frills around the windows.

The President of the collective farm came to the door with his napkin in his hand, but insisted, in spite of our remonstrances, on taking us around right away. He had a farmer's red com-

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plexion, cropped head, straight and cool blue eyes; the same kind of dignified and simple good manners as the young engineers on the boat. He made us sit down in his office. A pretty little girl brought us sprigs of lilac; then a good-looking woman came and gave us a bouquet. The President explained, and we asked him questions. Here the farmers all lived in their houses; in some farms, there were dormitories, too. They had chickens and cows of their own. The land was cultivated in common. What was left after the government levy and when they had taken what they needed for themselves, they were allowed to sell in Moscow. They either brought their babies up at home or put them in the crèche, as they wished. They either, as they wished, kept house or ate their meals in the common dining-hall. The young Englishman rashly suggested that the President might like to ask *us* questions; and the farmer politely made some queries about English soils and crops, none of which the boy seemed able to answer. He finally explained that his own special department did not involve knowing much about soil.

The babies in the crèche looked attractive and seemed to be well taken care of.—Red-faced women who were working in the fields made us presents of radishes and tomatoes. They laughed at the boy who had brought us and said that he could have a radish, because he was a guest, too; and this seemed to embarrass him extremely. They were also raising cucumbers in frames and that herb that they chop up and put in soup. I asked the little guide what it was called, but she said that she had never known what it was in Russian, so that she couldn't tell me in English. Nor did she know why the horses wore those great arched collars. I never met any Russian who knew this: it is like the railroad between Leningrad and Moscow.—In the cowshed, I asked whether they had milking-machines, but the farmer had never heard of them. I told the guide that in Ire-

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land the machines had upset the cows so badly that they had refused to give any milk; but that in America our cows were quite used to them. "The cows in America are more cultural," she said. The "*Kultura*" of which one hears so much in Russia is pre-eminently sanitary and technical.—Among the collective services, there was a homely rustic Beauty Parlor. It seems that all the farms have them now that the women are being encouraged to look attractive.

The collective dining-hall was rather like a country tavern. The farmer invited us to sit down, and they brought us beer and bread and sausage. Another party arrived, which included a tall Englishman with a beard, who looked like some sort of faintly shoddy Sir Somebody. "You speak English very well," he said to the girl interpreter with gracious and patronizing blandness. "Have you been in England?" The girl said no, that she had learned all her English in Moscow. He questioned her in the same gentle tone, as if he were addressing a child, but with insistence and latent irony, on the mutiny and expulsion of the kulaks. As we went out, the young Englishman introduced himself. It turned out, very much to my surprise and to that of the little guide, that the courtly man with the beard had been Minister of Agriculture in the Labor government.

We laughed a good deal on the way back over the Minister of Agriculture. I had sympathized with the little interpreter when he had been cross-examining her about the kulaks. "He was putting you on the spot," I said. "You don't know that American expression?" "Yes," she said. "You mean, he thought I lived there."

At dinner, from the window of the Novo-Moskovskaya. The rain is coming up: as the wind blows in at the window, all the crystals on the glass chandeliers begin to jingle. The deepening gray of the sky brings out the buildings of the city so that their

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colors count a little more: dry pale gray and pale straw or pale cream—what can you call those neutral colors?—with their short rectangular windows in rows, rising to red roofs and a few sharp spires, above the old wall with its regular slits and its vines creeping up from the base, and the quiet river below, rippling gently, not seeming to flow either way, with its rowing parties, its slow little speedboats.

They have been whitewashing everything in Moscow. The Russians know how to avoid running into it, but the foreigners get it all over them and are always brushing one another off. The foreigners call it "culture."

The lady from whom I took Russian lessons was the wife of an old Social Democrat and had lived for many years in exile: she had spent some time in England at Cambridge. I said that Cambridge was a beautiful place. "Yes," she answered drily. "I used to say it was a pity I was not Chekhov—because if I had been Chekhov, I should have had some excellent subjects at Cambridge."

Borodin: big straight-standing man with fearless, direct, dark-eyed gaze; square face, square broad shoulders, dark square clothes, white shirt, no vest, black toothbrush mustache whose proportions make it look more like a blacking-brush. I believe that his moral stature and the attitude that people adopt toward him make him seem bigger and taller than he is.—This is what the early race were like.

—When I caught glimpses of him later at the theater making his way in and out between the acts, I saw that his head was

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or dyes. There are a few indispensable red flags, but in general there is no more color than in a photograph in either clothes, posters, buildings or signs—nor in faces: the people are pale like all people who live in cities. Vast expanses of wide dirt walks, recently scraped out on the shadeless site; only sprigs of trees, only dim grass. In the eating pavilion where the women in sneakers, the men without neckties, the shaved-headed children, drift in by the thousand and are gradually served, there are only sprigs of purple hortensia among the bottles of pale yellow wine and the Soviet chocolate slabs spiral-piled on the bar. To an American, it seems like limbo. The Americans, in their amusement parks, have wild games and giddy music; they squeal and guffaw and shriek. But these people move very slowly; they neither laugh aloud nor sing, they seem not even to talk to one another, and in their faces there is no expression. Are they afraid of being overheard? are they afraid of being arrested for “hooliganism”?—or have their hardships sobered them so terribly?—or are they still so numb and dumb from their old subhuman life of serfdom that they have not yet been able to discover how human beings enjoy themselves?

—Yet at the same time—it is one of the paradoxes of Russia which make Russia so difficult to explain to people who haven't been there—there is a kind of freedom here that one does not feel in other countries. Here nobody is socially self-conscious; nobody is disagreeable or rude. There is no class of petty officials who snap at people and keep them from doing things.—And one notices that if one throws anything away, one immediately picks it up again—because there is an old woman standing by with a long-handled broom and a long-handled shovel, and she is ready to scoop up a cigarette butt the moment that anybody drops one, and one's relation to this old woman is already quite different from one's relation to the people who sweep up parks at home. Here the people in the park do really own it,

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and they are careful of what is theirs. A new kind of public conscience has come to lodge in these crowds.

One wanders with the flaccid stream, dazed by the rawness and paleness. The amusements are mostly intended to train people for aviation—for aviation and war. The young people go in for contrivances like metronome pendulums upside down which swing them over and back, in order to get them accustomed to looping the loop in the air; or, to develop their sense of equilibrium, they balance on narrow rails and try to knock each other off by slapping their right hands together; or they jump from a spiral tower in parachutes fastened to strings. Sometimes the parachutes get caught, and they dangle half-way down. One tries an exhibition of paintings, and it turns into a revolutionary museum, where little children who have come out for a holiday are looking at photographs of Communists having their penises strung up by Nazis and wax tableaux of women with their breasts cut off.

In the depths of the park, one finds at last a corner of natural trees and grass. To the music of a three-piece orchestra, a little group of young people in a clearing are dancing an old-fashioned Russian dance. It is simple, very quietly cheerful; they dance round and round in a ring, the same figures, the same little tune, again and again and again. And there is a group of girls on a grassy bank—some kind of girls' club on an outing—singing a long sad-sounding song, an old ballad, I was told by my companion, lamenting the plight of young daughters married off against their wills.

One returns and tries a movie: "The Golden Lake," a very poor adventure picture, with scarcely a tinge of imagination. It is almost with a shock one realizes that it is possible for a Russian film to be dull.

One decides at last to leave. The entrance is decorated with flowerbeds, planted on steep banks and depicting Lenin and

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Stalin in pansies. Outside, the toneless loud-speaker relaying "*Cielito Lindo*" and "*Oi Mari,*" the songs of brighter lands, happier ages.

—The whole world is stalled. Capitalism runs down, ceases to function; Communism makes little progress. The nations and the classes wait. We go neither forward nor back, we hardly know which way we are facing. And in the meantime, while the capitalist New Deal goes through unreal motions of imitating the Five-Year Plan, even in the Soviet Union the weight of the heavy old society dragging down the world outside, the old fear of the rapacity of one's neighbor, obstruct the way to health and freedom.

He had refused a cognac at dinner. Later we went to the Artistic Café (this kind of thing is new, too), and he suggested a bottle of wine (hm?), then he decided that as for himself, he would rather have an ice. He asked me whether I'd have coffee, and I said I'd have an ice—so he ordered an ice for me and coffee for himself. Then he lightly and brightly suggested cognacs.—He always gives money to beggars.

I stood against the wall under the archway beside a sharp-nosed green-eyed girl, together with a lot of other people who had wanted to get out of the rain. The rainstorm had turned into a hailstorm, and now something like a cloudburst occurred. Suddenly a great torrent of water came flooding the arcade from the courtyard, and streamed through like a river into the street. I had thought that it was all a damned nuisance; but none of the Russians showed any signs of feeling either anxiety or irritation, and now that they seemed about to be inundated, they all began to laugh.—They knew the moment it was over, and

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—where in any other city some would uncertainly have lingered
—everybody at once slipped away.

There is a green-eyed kind that wouldn't be gentle. I saw a girl in a street car whose green eyes gave a hard jewel-point to her prettiness and plumpness: a kind of beauty I had never seen; and then, in another street car, a boy with the same kind of eyes, very thin, at once wolfish and fascinating; he was staring as if he saw something that the rest of us didn't see, as animals do when they hear or smell—or rather, perhaps, as if he saw what we saw with far more intensity than we saw it.

Bolshaya Ordynka, where I rented an apartment: named after the Tartar Horde, with a few squat Tartar houses, old section of merchant residences. Old white walls and wide courtyards with some careless Russian greenery seen through gates. Old churches, closed and dead, faded pink or carnation: if they would only repaint them, the city would be gayer. They are loading some kind of archives into one of them.

One gradually comes to realize that, though the people's clothes are dreary, there is little, if any, destitution; though there are no swell parts of the city, there are no degraded parts either. There are no shocking sights on the streets: no down-and-outers, no horrible diseases, no old people picking in garbage pails. You get to like the little women with their socks and their flat sneakers, with their babies all so nicely wrapped up and delivered to them fresh from the hospital. They are certainly much surer of their babies than the women of the poor are with us.—And, although it is true that in Moscow, among the official and pro-

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fessional groups, there is plenty of disquietude and strain, one feels in an ordinary neighborhood like this a kind of assurance underlying everything which doesn't exist with us. The certainty of work means a lot.

—It is partly on this account, I think, that, in spite of the difficulties involved in getting to and living in Russia, it has, contrary to my expectation, seemed to me a relaxation. At home we are uneasy and apprehensive because the general life is precarious and tending to go to pieces as the force which gave it coherence slackens.

—I like to pass the quiet young people in their pale summer dresses and shirts, standing on the pavement talking, as I am coming home late at night.

(It is perhaps the Russian temperament, too: see the effect that tsarist Russia had on Rilke.)

It seems to be peculiarly difficult to write calmly about the Soviet Union. People invariably come here, whether they think they are for or against, in such an inflamed state of mind. And even those who are least inflammable are subject to strange alternations of enthusiasm and disappointment. The trouble is that people can't help feeling that the Soviets have challenged the world and of challenging them, in turn, to stand and deliver—so that there is a general disposition to put down everything good or bad that happens to one, to the workings of socialism. When the traveler discovers that his baggage does not turn up right away in his room, he decides that the Soviet system is a failure; if he runs into an amiable official who arranges to have something done for him immediately, he becomes confident that the Russian peasants are the happiest people in the world.

From this tendency these notes, I dare say, are not entirely

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free. I have finally been given a visa which enables me to stay here three months, to spend Russian money and to go and live where I please.

Dinner, and party afterwards. Foreigners and Russians; Americans and English; Negroes and Whites. One thing which the Soviets have certainly done is simplify social relations. It is, I suppose, easier for people of all kinds to get together and enjoy themselves and communicate with one another here than anywhere else in the world.

—After vodka and wine at dinner, I sat bemusedly gazing into the window—through unevenly-divided double panes, old white rather-without-taste lace curtains, with the drooping, rather pretty, silly hanging fern—into the light of the late evening sky, a pale gray and a pale unluminous orange, the loose green leaves: Russia.

—S.'s maid was there to help with the dinner and came to the party, too. She was older than S. and took care of her, and they were very fond of one another. At some point in the evening, S. would always come and sit beside her, and they would put their arms around one another. But the maid—from shyness, I imagine—declined invitations to dance, and when S. had gotten up to dance and the maid had sat down in her place, got up as soon as S. came back and gave her her seat again.—I had thought at first that their affectionate relations were due entirely to socialism. But the maid had evidently been conditioned more or less by the old regime; and I daresay that before the Revolution, the relation between a maid and her mistress, especially a mistress as darling as S., would not have been so very different.—Socialism, which had in Russia, from the point of view of industrial development, a very unfavorable field, had, from the point of view of democratic manners, a ground exceptionally well-prepared in the natural friendliness of the Russians. It is

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strange to think that S. and her maid, sitting and watching the dancing with their arms around each other's shoulders, are, through that strange short circuit of history, partly the result of an anticipation of the classless society of the future, partly the result of a survival of feudal relations.

—I took M. D. home in a droshky: transparent night with the bright crescent moon in a sky of almost day—clacking over the cobbles, the droshky shaking from side to side. At a cross-street we had to stop while scores of young men on bicycles passed us as silently and softly as some kind of migration of night-moths.—We talked about Lenin and Christ, Communism and Christianity; differences in capacity between men; whatever the more “molecular” Marxists may say, this devotion to the memory of Lenin is the measure of his superiority to other men.

Dinner in the Sokolniki gardens: infinitely more attractive than the Park of Culture and Rest—quite entrancing, in fact, in the evening. It was originally the hunting park of Ivan the Terrible; and it was later made a public garden. There are tree-planted walks, secluded benches and a gay little restaurant with an orchestra, tables under the trees and *cabinet particuliers*. It reminded me of old Europe, of Karlsbad; but it has a wildness which is entirely Russian. The park proper gradually merges with a slender disheveled forest in which people like to lose themselves and lie about among mossy tree-roots.—I was told that the “more intelligent people” came here.

As we were standing in the restaurant waiting for a place, a dark man who was eating alone invited us to sit down at his table. My companion and I carried on in English a long conversation about literature, which it seemed to us the dark man was following. And it seemed to me that my Russian friend was displaying in our discussion of Joyce a somewhat narrower

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variety of Marxism than he might perhaps have insisted on if there had been no unknown person present. The stranger, as he got on with his wine, began smiling and chuckling to himself in such an eerie and disquieting manner that my companion addressed him in Russian. He turned out to be a Turkish business man.

There are moments when the evasiveness, the procrastination, the imprecision and the meekness of the Russians bring out the Ivan the Terrible in all of us.

It is quiet in the Bolshaya Ordynka. Little naked children play in the courtyard; the radios make an overtone of old waltzes. There is a bookcase full of books about Russia, and I lie on the couch and read them. I can understand how people get fascinated with Russia: the old ambiguous borderland between the West and the East, uncharted, unsurveyed, unlimited, unplowed, unmastered, unaccountable till now to civilization. The people seem to have deep resources like the minerals of Kuznetsk and the Urals whose existence has only just been discovered. What is there beneath the murmur of this immense and amorphous life which lies all around me here?—What is there still unknown, unimagined?

Faces which seemed blank or coarse are suddenly suffused with gentleness or the most sensitive understanding.

In no country I have ever been in, even France, has literature such prestige as in Russia; in no country, even in the Germany of the day before yesterday, has science commanded such re-

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spect. Books at the present time are hardly less necessary to the Russians than food and clothing themselves. Even the factories have their bookstores.

Abolish the church with its spiritual direction, and substitute for a government based on divine right, a government based on a scientific view of history; and you shift to the strictly human sources of order and inspiration a kind of veneration and anxious attention which they have never enjoyed before. And with the passing of the pageantry of Church and court, the theater becomes more important. There has been in our own time no parallel—even in the case of Anatole France—to the position of Gorky in the Soviet Union. In the past a close friend of Lenin's, he is at present a kind of Commissar of Literature; and is perhaps closer to sharing the glory of Stalin than any other public man.

The effect on a writer of a visit to Russia is therefore both flattering and sobering. Nowhere else in the world does the writer receive so much honor; nowhere else to the same degree is he made conscious of responsibility. At first, he is likely to find this exhilarating. For from the Marxist point of view a writer is not guilty of exploiting anybody, and consequently (unless he is a Communist and has to give half his earnings to the Party) there is no way, outside the regular taxation, of preventing him from making profits. And the result is that Soviet writers, if there is any considerable demand for their work, achieve not only distinction, but a higher standard of living than most of their fellows. Yet when one has looked at things a little more closely, one comes to have certain doubts about the advantages enjoyed by Soviet writers. There is the same temptation here as elsewhere to cash in on a popular success by playing up to the official point of view; and serious writers whose points of view do not easily fit in with the official one are obliged to take certain losses just as they are in the other

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kind of society. So that the same sort of antagonisms as elsewhere arise between the writers who have taken the losses and the writers who have cashed in on the market. Alexey Tolstoy, for example, seems to be the perfect Soviet equivalent to the high-grade *Saturday Evening Post* writer. (I have heard him compared by a Russian to Booth Tarkington and Joseph Hergesheimer.) You find, when you ask people what they think of him, that they either consider him, or pretend to consider him, the best living Russian writer after Gorky or that they don't want to talk about him at all.

There is perhaps a danger in Russia that the writers may become a special caste, that they may approximate, even, a priesthood. In Moscow, there is a special apartment house built by the government for writers, in which most of them seem to be living (though others have obstinately stood out for seclusion from their professional fellows). The government, however, has so far opposed all attempts of groups of writers to get official authority behind them. The official liquidation of RAPP was a blow against literary intolerance (though, characteristically, the government has gone so far as to make it impossible for the former leaders of RAPP even to continue to express their opinions, and has prohibited literary groups altogether). And the insistence by Stalin that Pasternak and Babel be included in the delegation to the Writers' Congress in Paris this summer is evidence of an official disposition to value men of artistic ability, irrespective of their political zeal, above writers who are merely politically regular—as Mayakovsky, during his lifetime under suspicion of romantic individualism, seems to have taken his place since his death as the sole unquestioned revolutionary classic. Certainly there has prevailed of late a much more general respect for art and a much freer attitude toward technique.

The new official policy on this was formulated by Radek and Bukharin at the All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers in Au-

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And the effect of all this upon me was the opposite of the effect I have noted at home on writers with revolutionary leanings, of repercussions from the Soviet Union. I found in the apartment where I was staying a volume of Elinor Wylie's poems, containing some, collected after her death, which I had never read before; and, though I had always had a feeling that her later work was somehow inferior to her early work, an impression that, ingenious though it was and consummate in craftsmanship, it had tended to become more and more like a glass-case of expensive objects imported by an American connoisseur from abroad, I found now that it seemed to me more remarkable, instead of less remarkable, than before. I had seen how the new Soviet poets had had to go school to older writers who, though friendly to the Revolution, were not essentially revolutionary poets—men like Pasternak and Bagritsky, who seemed to stand to the new generation somewhat in the relation of Eliot and Yeats to us; how they had had to fall back on tools which had been forged for other uses. And I had been surprised to be told of the esteem in which even the exile Bunin was now held and of his influence on Soviet fiction. But, after all, in writing as in other things, there is only one kind of excellence. You cannot learn to write well from poor writers, however correct their position may be. And when you are cut loose from supernatural guidance, when money has lost its prestige, when you are thrown into a crude and disorganized world with nothing but the human intellect to organize, to guide and to refine, you realize suddenly how very seldom the intellect is fit for high-grade work. And where literature must take over duties which it has hitherto shared with other institutions, the genuine masters of literature are seen to stand out on an earth which is no longer overhung by the Heavens. As I reread Elinor Wylie, I kept thinking, what a marvellous language! What crystalline colors, what palpable textures! What resource, what

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felicity, what wit! I had never before felt so vividly the rarity and the value of people who could do something fine very well.

As I was walking one evening in the Tverskaya with a well-known Russian critic, a little stocky man, who passed us, contemptuously called the critic's name. The latter explained to me that the man was a poet whose works he had criticized adversely. We went into a restaurant, and the man came in, too, and sat down at a table with another man and uttered horrible threats against the critic.

The next time I saw the critic, he told me that the poet was in jail. The poet was a Cossack from the Urals, who had been "writing in praise of the old Russia" and making himself obnoxious in various ways. One of the things which he admired in the old Russia was its implacable anti-Semitism, and he was attempting to remain true to the tradition. Having some grievance against a Jewish poet, he went and beat him up in his lodgings. The Jew complained, and a petition to the authorities was signed by most of the principal poets of Moscow, recommending a jail sentence for the Cossack. He was accordingly sent up for six months.

Visits to the *dacha*. It had once belonged to a rich business man of Moscow, who had been one of the patrons of the Art Theatre. Now there were several families in it, and it was rather like a summer boarding house. It is hard to find words for this countryside: loose, level, untrimmed, running to wilderness. The groves of wild wispy trees produce a peculiar delight and yet elude the grasp of the mind, as the landscape is free from cultivation. The crows are cawing among these trees in the late never-ending afternoon, as I left them doing at home in New Jersey; but it seems to me that these are Russian crows

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and that I don't know what they are saying. There are glimpses of big light-brown summer cottages built in the last half of the last century (and now used for rest-homes and sanitariums) with cupolas and jigsaw woodwork, not unlike such houses in New Jersey and yet rather unlike them, too.—So the life escapes me: there is no emphasis in it, no schedule, everything flows easily into something else. This *dacha* is like Chekhov's plays. There are young people playing games; a "master of the *dacha*" in a white Russian shirt who gets up early in the morning and works in a weedy untidy garden where he raises great pink and white peonies; a lady who is always singing and acting old snatches of comic songs. Somebody is always sitting down to the piano, and somebody else may or may not drift up and begin to sing what he is playing.

The G.'s entertain their many guests and dispense their magnificent hospitality in one room of an apartment entry in Moscow where eight families, which include thirty people, are living. They all use the same toilet and kitchen. Around the big table in the crowded room, with the vodka, the cherries and the herring, some of the jolliest evenings I have ever spent. When anyone gets started singing after ten, the others have to make him pipe down, on account of the other people in the entry.

—A girl in a red dress sits reading in the dark hall. She is the daughter of a Communist who lives in the entry, and now that she has finished school, she doesn't know what to do with herself. Is sulky because, unlike her friends, she can't go to a *dacha* for the summer. Stays at home and quarrels with her parents.—Reminded me of girls in small towns before the days when everybody had a car, as I used to see them in the summers at home.

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The Physcultur Parade, one of the three great demonstrations of the year, the other two being the May Day Parade and the anniversary of the October Revolution. The Arcade Building opposite the Kremlin is hung with great faces of Lenin and Stalin and with pictures of runners and hurdlers so crude that they would disgrace an American billboard. The slogan, "Ready for Labor and Defense!"

The whole thing was quite different and more impressive than any American parade I had ever seen. For one thing, more people take part: there were a hundred and fifteen thousand men, women and children, and it took them six hours to file by or perform before the reviewing stand. They all wore white shorts and white athletic shoes and socks and all had short round legs, and at a distance it was almost impossible to tell the women and the men apart. The principal colors were red, white and blue, with occasional variations of yellow and green, and the costumes, which were perfectly simple, had been designed with excellent taste. A band which seemed as big as a regiment played the same simple march from the film "Merry Fellows" over and over again.

They began with "The International." Before the little lined-up round legs, a plain black car smoothly passes: in it are the head of Physcultur, standing up with his arm raised in salute, and Stalin and two other officials, dressed in plain white suits. A cheer like a wave goes around the Square.

Then the parade begins to pass. To an American, it seems a little comic to have a sports parade on this scale, or indeed to have a sports parade at all. We take tennis and basketball and bicycling and swimming and shooting for granted. It seems to us we have always been doing these things. But the Russians have only just got them. Before, under the old regime, they were pastimes of the privileged classes. And it is only since the Revolution, with the foundation of proletarian athletic clubs,

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that the people have been able to get sports equipment. What a novelty sport still is may be judged from the proportion of the number of the paraders, the complete personnel of the sports clubs, to the Moscow population of four million.

So that the young people have arranged, in all solemnity, a procession of extraordinary floats glorifying the various sports. They show you an example of almost everything going on before your eyes on a float: a tennis-match on a moving court, with the fous shooting off on to the pavement; an imitation mountain top being scaled by mountain-climbers; a boxing-match; a football game; battalions of bicycle riders; tumblers who turn over in wheels; a diver who dives into a tarpaulin; sharp shooters taking aim under difficulties and hunters bringing down stuffed birds; and, most sensational of all, a miniature inclined track with people running up and down it, as it is slowly wheeled along. Men and girls posed in niches or carried, standing upright, by the legs, in awkward and unsteady postures. An enormous boxing glove that marches and flops in an uncanny manner to the rhythm of the men who are carrying it like one of the dolls in the Macy's parade.—Portrait after portrait of Stalin, with, only rarely, one of somebody else; "Long live Comrade Stalin, best friend of Physcultur!", "Thanks to Comrade Stalin for the good life!"

There passes a detachment of men with shaved heads, fixed bayonets and bare chests. It begins to dawn upon you that this is really a preparedness demonstration: "Ready for Labor and Defense." A fleet of aeroplanes appear, flying in a formation which spells "Stalin." Black beelike bombing planes swoop and zoom, menacing, loud and dynamic—then hurtle off to specks in space.

A boy goes up in a silver balloon and drops parachutes with wreaths of flowers.

Yet the effect of this is never really comic, as our American

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parades often are. It is too simple, too genuine—and too powerful. As the minute-hand goes round the Kremlin clock and the clubs keep on marching past with unabated earnestness and vigor, the impression becomes overwhelming. It remained with me all the rest of the day. Even while I was having dinner with friends and when I went out to the *dacha* in the evening, those thick round bare legs in shorts were still marching on through my mind.

I didn't stay to the very end. After the parade proper, there were physcultur mass dances in front of the official stand. I learned afterwards that the great final feature was the emergence from something or other of a gigantic portrait of Stalin.

Everybody had to stand up through the entire afternoon. That was why I left after four hours. There were ramps in the stands that you could sit on; but as soon as anybody attempted to do so, he was smilingly admonished by a militiaman that it was not polite to sit down.

I asked several Russians why this was—they were not enjoying it any more than the tourists—and they said that they didn't know: it hadn't used to be like that. Finally, a Russian told me that it was because nobody was allowed to sit down while Stalin was standing up.

And the whole thing, from the point of view of the spectators, was very much less democratic than any American parade. There were stands on only one side of Red Square, and these, by American estimates, had room for many more people than were in them. Nobody was admitted to the Square who did not have a ticket for the stands, and, as the parade took place entirely inside the Square, nobody else really saw it. Apparently the only persons who are privileged to assist at these big demonstrations are Communists, near-Communists and foreign visitors. Many

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of the people I knew in Moscow, in spite of repeated applications, had never seen even a May Day celebration and envied the fortunate tourist.

The whole thing is an apotheosis of Stalin on a scale which makes our poor patient presidents, standing bareheaded in the raw March winds, with their silk hats held before them in their hands, while other people sit comfortably with their hats on, seem the humblest of public servants.

This glorification of Stalin is undoubtedly one of the things in Russia which affects an American most unpleasantly. The paper comes out almost every day with a photograph of Stalin on the front page, either standing with a distinguished visitor or, if there is no distinguished visitor, visiting somebody or something himself; and every speech and important public document ends with a tribute to Stalin, like the prayer at the end of a sermon. Stalin is plastered all over the place, and even genuinely popular public figures such as Litvinov and Voroshilov are such a long way behind him that they seem scarcely to belong to the same race.

When I spoke of this to a Russian, I was told that Stalin himself did not like it. (And since I have been back, I have heard the same opinion expressed by a Russian who was anti-Stalinist: "The situation is so tense," he said, "that they have to have an ikon.") It is unquestionably true that this relation between Stalin and his public is reciprocal. An American in Russia who has been here long enough to take for granted the features which at first aroused his enthusiasm—the natural democratic manners, the throwing open of everything to the people—is likely, as time goes on, to begin to find himself repelled by what seems to him the cold-blooded manipulation of the people by the governing power. He may have left the United States with

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a conviction that his countrymen, who keep up with the Joneses and believe what they read in the Hearst papers, are a conformist and credulous people; but when he has had a chance to observe what seems to him the docility and timidity of the Russians, he decides that the Americans, by comparison, are critical and self-reliant. And his instinct is to resent the brazenness with which it seems to him the Stalin administration propagandizes and dragoons the people while always formulating its policies in some such language as, "The indignant proletariat demand the execution of so-and-so," or, "The victorious proletariat express their gratitude to Comrade Stalin for doing so-and-so." The American is antagonized by this, as he would be if it were done to himself—as, indeed, he remembers unpleasantly, it *was* at the time of the War.

Yet this impression misrepresents what is happening. This is not the United States, and the people involved are different from us. The Russians, before the Revolution, had had a paternalistic government for centuries; they had no democratic institutions: the dumas were the dolls of the Tsar. Remember that before the Revolution, eighty percent of the Russians were illiterate. Remember that there are among these masses who march in a Physcultur parade, men who have changed their names from Svinukhin and Sobakin to Novy and Partisanov in order to destroy the memory of the time when their great-grandfathers and their grandfathers were exchanged for pigs and dogs, and to establish the mere human dignity which has been brought them by the Revolution. The dictatorship of such a proletariat inevitably results in a state of things where the proletarians, though the favored class, are dictated to by a governing group. The Russian proletarians and peasants are educating themselves with avidity and have now, it is said, almost reversed the old illiteracy figures. And they are taking most seriously their new duties of citizenship. But how can

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people who have just learned to read be expected to criticize the press? And how can they be expected to develop political institutions which have taken the Western peoples centuries? In the meantime, for all their efforts of progress, there is always the tendency to lapse back into their earlier relation to the Little Father. Even if old Bolshevik Stalin had not wanted to be Stalin apotheosized, the people would have tried to invent him. Remember that Lenin at the present time is appearing in person like any saint to the more primitive inhabitants of the Union, and that the reason why the visitors to his tomb are kept so rapidly moving is alleged to be the anxiety of the authorities to avert possible miraculous cures. One has only to attend some great public demonstration like the Physcultur Parade, or even to go to a popular play which has been written to illustrate some new policy, and to hear the loud bursts of applause, to be convinced that the relation between Stalin and his proletarian public is very close and strong. They not only fear Stalin: they trust him to see them through. There seems a real identification of will between Stalin and a central element of the people in whose name he speaks.

Admitting this, however, and with all respect for Stalin's abilities: his energy, his positiveness, his shrewdness, his adamant adherence to his Marxism, with all appreciation of his cardinal importance in Europe at the present time, is it wise for him to allow this deification to be carried as far as it is? It is true at the present time in Russia not only that the name of Stalin cannot except furtively be taken in jest—when the radical caricaturist Will Low drew a picture of Stalin in the dust, the Russian who was with him smeared it out—but that there seems to be a tendency in some quarters to be afraid to utter it at all, like the unpronounceable name of God with the Jews. People resort to circumlocutions, just as they refer to Mussolini as "*Lui*." On one occasion, when I was walking with a Russian in

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the streets of a country town, he began saying something about "our big man—I don't want to say his name." I was prepared for some sinister revelation, but it turned out that he was only going to quote with approval something that Stalin had said in his interview with H. G. Wells. I suppose that the trouble was that he was afraid to be heard talking about Stalin to a foreigner in a foreign language. But, after all, as Van Loon has reminded us, Frederick the Great, that feudal autocrat, when informed that a poster he was trying to read was a satire directed against himself, walked on, merely remarking that they ought to have hung it lower. And I got the impression, although no one would admit it openly, that most intelligent Russians, however loyal, were a little bit ashamed of what had happened. I have heard a Russian, unaware of a foreign presence, groan to another Russian when he was handed the morning paper and confronted with the inevitable cap and mustache.

This cult has nothing to do with Marxism and is not justified by a socialist dictatorship. Marxism regards the ruler as the human, and hence fallible, representative of the interests of certain human beings. Lenin was irreverent toward himself in the sense that he took himself seriously only as the agent of the revolutionary cause. He cared nothing about power for its own sake; nothing about admiration. He always acknowledged and lamented his human errors of judgment. One cannot imagine Lenin, for all the popular devotion he commanded, playing a rôle like that of Stalin—a rôle which gives constant encouragement to the people who want to make it out that the Soviets are the same thing as Mussolini, and which invites the fate of Aristides. As the Russians become better educated and more capable of thinking for themselves, how are the young people going to react to the ikon?

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This relation of the people to the dictatorship is the core of the whole Russian question and must be faced and honestly dealt with by any advocate of socialism in America. It seems to me obviously impossible that a socialist government in the United States should resemble the state of things in Russia; and it is totally unrealistic for either the opponents or the champions of socialism to talk as if socialism would mean for us the *naïvetés* of a Stalin regime. We have in the United States some miserable and illiterate groups; but we have in general no such feudal peasantry and no such primitive proletariat as Russia (I have described a Polish working-class section in the earlier part of this book). The farmers and working men and women, the disillusioned middle class and the radicalized executives and experts, who would have to put over socialism in America, would no more, in their political relations, resemble the Stalinist Communists and their Stalin-adoring constituents than they would be holding physical culture parades for the purpose of celebrating the bicycle, the basket ball and the tennis-racket. In spite of much corruption and many idiocies, we have certainly learned something about self-government, just as we have learned to play outdoor games. Let us hope that we have no need to fear the feudal elements of Russian socialism any more than we need fear the feudal elements of German and Italian fascism.

A curious incident illustrated—unconsciously on the part of the persons involved—the attitude of the Russians toward Stalin.

I had gone to the apartment of Russian friends and was talking after dinner with the husband. He was telling me about the tsars. He thought that Ivan the Terrible was too pathological to be interesting. "But the people are supposed to have loved him," I said. "Russian-like," he replied, "the ones who survived

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were grateful, because he'd spared their lives. They thought he was an able man—a little bit strong, perhaps!—but an able administrator. And the people he'd imprisoned and tortured and killed weren't there to object." Then he went on to Peter the Great, whom he admired. He told me how Peter had set out to do away with the old Russian beards. "He would wait for them to come along, and then when he would see one, he would say, 'Ah-ha!', and he would make the man come in and he would shave it off himself. You can imagine an ordinary ruler cutting off *one* beard to make an example; but Peter worked at it for two or three months! He thought that all the old Russian traditions were nesting in those big beards.—That's a strange thing," he added, "which could happen only in Russia: that the word of one man could regulate the habits and thoughts of a whole people!"

In the meantime, the wife had gone to sleep on the couch and when we had finished this conversation, she woke up. "I just dreamt," she said, "that Stalin and Kaganovitch came up the stairs here and came to our apartment. I was terribly frightened!—but Stalin patted me on the shoulder, like this, and smiled."

Evening at the *dacha*. We walked to the end of a path while I looked out at the Corot-like birch-trees, flimsy, tall and slim, stringing a loose lacy screen against the still, so late, translucent, the so slowly waning light. We sat down on a bench, and from the *dacha* next door the music of a radio came through to us and we could see that there were people dancing, but there was shrubbery between us and them. It began to be cold, and we got up to walk.

Though I had already had a dinner in Moscow, they insisted on my eating a second. The evening became very gay. The master of the *dacha* sat down at the piano, and the lady who

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liked comic songs sang a Caucasian ballad about a woman who went down to the seashore to bathe and there met a dark trans-Caucasian. When her baby was born, the husband said that he was glad to have a son, but he couldn't see much resemblance. Then they did the old dances, Russian and Gypsy and Ukrainian and Caucasian, with their stiffly-held gestures and their stamping steps, and wound up with a touch of ballet.—As we were leaving, the man in the white blouse gave us a handful of his lovely white peonies, wet from the last of their innumerable showers.

—At the station, when the train finally came in, it made a start as if immediately to pull out again. We rushed aboard without time to say good-by to the people who had come to see us off. But then it stopped and backed a little and stopped again. Our friends said good-by through the window. Then the train seemed to start, and we waved; but again it began to back. It started and stopped and backed. Great gaiety: the lady who had sung the song would bow as if acknowledging an encore every time the train came back again, and wave her handkerchief in burlesque farewell, calling out, "*Do svidanya! Do svidanya!*", every time we stood still. My companion said: "*Notre technique magnifique! Illustration pour vous!*"

—At one of the stations on the way back to Moscow, two dwarfish little stocky round girls got in and sat down opposite each other beside us. They had just been seen off by two boys, and their conversation was all "he said" and "I said." The prettier one, who, coming for the outing, had tied her best clean scarf around her head, leaned forward as she became more earnest and thrust her hands into the lap of her companion, who, more dignified, cooler and calmer, sat straight up in her seat and listened. It was a story about going to a fortune-teller and giving her ten rubles to read her palm: the woman had said a lot of things but had told her nothing practical; finally she had

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gotten up indignantly and said that the woman had told her nothing about whether or how soon she would get married and that she wanted her money back, and she had started to grab it and go; but the woman had hung on to the money and had said, "You'll get married! You'll get married!"

Nobody approves more heartily of the more ruthless policies of the government than P., a young American living in Moscow. The very thought of the rebellious kulaks makes him furious: they had "mutinied," he says, and they "had to be taught a lesson." When Yenukidze fell out of favor, P. declared that what they ought to do was "put a little lead poison in his food." Of another young American, the son of an engineer, who has never fitted in in Moscow, he says with strong disapproval that "he always goes around by himself, doesn't talk to anybody, hasn't any friends: he's a regular Trotskyite!" If anyone expresses notions which seem to him to be out of step, he cries, "Let's have a necktie party!"—P.'s family are always kidding him, and are rather troubled about him, because he has never had a girl.

A lady of the old bourgeoisie told me that, in earlier years, she had read Dostoevsky's novels as if they had been fairy-tales: they seemed to her to have nothing to do with life. Women like her, she said, had lived pretty closely shut up in their houses. Then when the Revolution opened everything up, she saw all the types he had described. "He is very modern," she said. She keeps telling her daughter that she is a character from Dostoevsky.

Opening of the National café. Very modern and quite pretty bar with the bottles spaced so far apart that it gives it that

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flimsy Russian look. Lights too glaring for the dancing. Lots of journalists and poets at the tables. I became aware of a row of dark presences peering in through the windows over the curtains that half-screened them from the street; and when we left, we saw the people lined up outside with their eyes glued to the glass.

We went on to a night club where they had Gypsies, in company with a Jewish columnist, whom we had met in the National café. As we were standing up in the tram-car, a man said to him: "Don't crowd against me! I've got a sore knee!"—and repeated an old Russian proverb: "No one can feel the sufferings of others." The columnist replied: "If we felt the sufferings of others, we'd never be able to live. It's hard enough to bear our own." The people in the car all laughed.

The Troitsk-Sergievsk Monastery. It was founded by a saint of the fourteenth century and, up to the Revolution, had been the principal Mecca of pilgrimage. Also, I was told, a place, like Fontainebleau, to which lovers on a holiday used to come.—The Bolsheviks have cleaned out the priests and the monks, and now it is as empty as Carcassonne. They have even renamed the railroad station and have taken out all the seats—I suppose, to make it uninviting.

Miry road up the hill past the dilapidated droshkies. Then the rainbow delirium of the monastery appears, rising out of the irregular green countryside under the rain-gray sky, like a mirage of the Arabian Nights: blue and gold, red and yellow and pink, a grove of blue phallic spires painted with golden stars. Halfway to Asia here!

We went to a little green hotel, which seemed to me the oldest and poorest and most primitive place of the kind in which

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I had ever been. We had to pay for a room for a day—which, to be sure, was not very much—in order to get a place by ourselves to eat the picnic lunch we had brought with us. There was a little narrow bed and a colorless dirty couch full of holes from which the straw was sticking out. We laughed about it, sent for a samovar, had vodka, bread and butter, sausage and hard-boiled eggs, looking out on the monastery walls and the muddy street of the village. Then just as the samovar arrived, they told us the museum closed at four, so we left the tea and hurried out to see it.

As we walked up the hill, past a booth for beer with a sign that said "American Bar," the little kids in the street, seeing our city clothes, shouted after us: "Moscow! Moscow!"

The monastery made upon me an overpowering and nightmarish impression. All this Byzantine stuff is so new to me that I am drawn out of my sightseer's detachment and lose myself in it completely.—Uncomfortable combination of the cruel and the ugly with the pretty and sentimental; Coney Island full of torture chambers and charnel-houses. The Metropolitan's palace: he had a private shrine in his bedroom and little angels painted on the ceiling that look exactly like Renaissance cupids. In another room, there are horrible pictures of floggings and executions by landlords of the old regime and a model of a peasant's izba to offset the glamor of the palace. Heavy clumsy gaudy jeweled miters; ikons embroidered on tapestry in amethysts and pearls—including one which had occupied for years one of the wives of Ivan the Terrible, after he had sent her into seclusion; a great store-room full of vestments, as varied and gorgeous as women's gowns, carefully put away on hangers and smelling strongly of moth balls; a gigantic carved wooden wine-boat used by the bibulous prelates, on one end of which a kind of wild dog buries his teeth in the neck of a boar while at the other the handle is made by the body of a horrid

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and half-insectlike monster. A red and white church in five tiers, given by Catherine the Great, with a long straight stiff square steeple not much less thick than the church. Frivolous diamonded walls in yellows and browns and blues, with spiral columns twined with painted vine-leaves. A little kiosk for holy water, as fancy as Russian pastry: pink cream, domy crust, pillars like twisted rolls; and adorned with cupid-cherubim's faces. Ignoble old tomb of the Godunov tsars in terrible disrepair: somebody has broken a hole under one corner of the big marble lid—I suppose, out of simple curiosity; but there is nothing to be seen inside except dirt. It seems that they moved them out here because they were not true Ruriks, and therefore didn't rate the Kremlin (so I note that, whereas the Lenin Institute and the Marx and Engels Institute are right in the heart of Moscow, the Plekhanov Institute is a separate thing way off on the outskirts of the city). The big church behind the tomb is now used to store cabbages and other vegetables: it keeps them cool in summer. Church built by Ivan the Terrible to expiate the murder of his son, he had these alternations of piety with crime: painted all over inside with pictures of pink angels and saints that cover even the thimble-cups of the domes. These angels with six wings give me the willies; and I cannot like the Greek Orthodox ikons, even the ones, like those of Rublev, which are good. The early ones are so knotted and cramped, their gray eyes so anguished and so broken to anguish, their souls so tensely contracted. There is nothing of Fra Angelico here; they shed forth no human tenderness. And the later ones are saccharine and sickly. The miracle-breeding bones of St. Sergius, now a museum-exhibit like another: an old woman who has come in behind us shakes her head and rolls up her eyes, aghast at the desecration.

When we came out, I felt disquieted and rather disgusted. E. said that it had made her sad "to think that people had be-

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lieved all that" and that now it was as dead as the Delphic oracle.

We went back to our little room and went on with the tea, the bread and butter, the sausage, the eggs and the vodka. We talked about the past and the future. They had cut themselves loose from the past and they didn't yet have the future, for which they had worked so hard. "Come!" said M. "We have this little room, this vodka, this bread, this sausage, this view of the old monastery—these are *now!*" I gazed out the window, full of contentment. The sun had unexpectedly come out: the sky was for Russia quite blue and the smallish white clouds were bright. Against them, an onion-topped spire pierced in the clear air; and below it, a red roof and a red fence set off as vivid white a low building with one row of square windows. A little gray foal with shaky legs came trotting down the sloping cobbled street in front of a horse and cart. Then came a queer open carriage, very dirty and rickety-looking, driven by a little boy, and with a lot of other little boys in a whole sequence of seats behind him. I asked M. what it was, and he said it was a charabanc and slipped into a popular song:

*"Ekh, sharaban, da, sharaban,
Ne budet deneg—tebya prodam!
Ekh, sharaban,
Da, trogai, trogai!
A ya poidu
Svoey dorogoi!"*

("Ah, charabanc, yes, charabanc,
If the money gives out, I must sell you!
Ah, charabanc,
Get along with you, giddap!
And as for me,
I'll go my own road!")

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They had sung it, he said, during the Civil Wars. It sounded older than that: the tune was like "Fair Evelina."

—How sweet the charabanc, the song, the little foal, the children, the sausage, our company drinking to the present—seemed after the miters and the tortured saints!

—The train going back was crowded. We thought we were very lucky to get into a little shut-off apartment. But it turned out to belong to the conductor, who appeared and made us leave. She said she had to have it to herself, as she had been on the train five days.—L. squeezed in on one of the benches, and presently the old woman sitting next to her fell asleep and toppled over on her shoulder. Later, when there was room on another bench for all of us to sit down together, L. couldn't come over to join us because she didn't want to wake up the old woman. She sat there, alternately glancing toward us and looking down at the head of the old woman, which tranquilly reposed on her bosom.

A political story brought back by a man who had been traveling in the provinces. In one of the towns he had visited, there had been a brilliant theatrical director. This man had composed and put on a chronicle play of the life of Lenin which had proved such a tremendous success that the town had held a banquet in his honor. It had taken place on the stage of the theater: toasts had been drunk and speeches delivered. The praise of the director was on every tongue. A little while afterwards, however, some political busybody of the town discovered that the play had been based on a little biographical sketch of Lenin written by Zinoviev years ago. This man immediately proclaimed that the production, deriving as it did from a notorious opponent of Stalin who had just been disgraced and exiled, was corrupted with inaccuracies amounting to heresy.

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The director was called upon to answer these charges and, a few weeks after the congratulatory banquet, he was arraigned on the stage of his theater, the same place where the banquet had been given, and compelled to leave the town.

The Russians have carried this sort of thing to most absurd and self-destructive lengths. They seem at present engaged in the same kind of effort to get Zinoviev and Kamenev out of their histories, their albums of the Revolution and their libraries, as was made, after the expulsion of Trotsky, to strike his name from the Revolution.

We had something of this kind, to be sure, during the War, when we were dropping German studies in the schools and renaming the Hamburger steaks and sauerkraut. And there is no doubt, as the Southerners insist, a misleading anti-Confederacy bias in our histories of the Civil War. But we have never yet, so far as I know, actually suppressed historical sources. It is one of the paradoxes of the Soviet Union that the country which most reveres science, which has in many fields proved itself most scrupulous to preserve the human record intact, should be capable of these ostrich-like attempts to conceal its own recent history.

Certainly one of the very worst features which has been contributed by the Stalinist Communists to the international revolutionary movement is this practice of systematic falsification.

Nevertheless, it is probably true that it is harder in the Soviet Union to fob people off with pure bunk than anywhere else in the world. The Communists have their own kind of cant, and their pronouncements are obviously sometimes far from truthful; but, in the long run, they must always give way to any serious pressure from the people: they have to deliver the goods. When you have made a clean slate of the past, when

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you have got rid of all the systems of private profit which have come between the people and the fulfillment of their needs, you make it difficult to satisfy them with words. Think of the reservoirs of delusion and false values which flood our minds at home: the newspapers, the speeches, the sermons, the radio, the sales talks, the advertisements! No matter how much we may be sure that we see through them, we go around partly doped all the time. The Russians are far less free than we are to talk about certain things; but then, on the other hand, they escape a vast amount of pernicious nonsense. In this way, the Soviet Union is bracing.

Further visits to the *dacha*. Under the fluid surface, I begin to be able to see down to the things that are happening below. They are all technical and professional people, some of whom have known each other a long time; and they are living here at very close quarters, each family in a tiny room. There are old jealousies among them, dreadful ordeals and anxieties, difficult family situations which have for years been mounting up to a crisis. I can see that even the comic songs of the lady who is always asking for music have their relevance to other things. But the texture and pace of their lives are so different from ours in the West.

We were waiting at the railroad station. On the platform across the tracks, a group of school-children with their teacher on an outing, were waiting for the train back to Moscow. They were singing a little song which dealt, as my companion explained to me, with the forests, the fields and the birds. Today, she said, they were taught songs like that: formerly they had only been allowed to sing songs about the Civil Wars.

Presently, a group of soldiers, also waiting for a train, began

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to sing. I asked what the song was about, and she said it was a marching song. I remarked that it seemed sad for a marching song, that most of the songs sounded sad. "*Avant la revolution,*" she said, "*les russes étaient très tristes. Maintenant ils sont tristes.*"

"Big Carnival," the first they have had, and a part of their attempt to cheer up the people, but held between rainy days in that confounded Park of Culture and Rest.

The place seemed more depressing than ever: it was heart-breaking to see the people strolling so listlessly and dumbly, in their carnival masks and false noses, along those wide and naked paths. But what is it that is the matter? I keep asking myself. Where are the gaiety and the fantasy one finds in the popular ballet of "The Three Fat Men" or in the scene of the Capulet's masked ball in "Romeo and Juliet"?—I got detached, along with two other Americans, from the party with which we had come. One was an American-born Armenian, a young writer, who had only just come to Moscow and who was saying all the wrong things. He couldn't understand and kept protesting. The other was an American-born Russian Jew. He had Communist affiliations and had just arrived on his first visit to Russia and was lost in admiration for everything. He remarked, as he looked about him, on the excellence of Russian taste in decoration, which is certainly one of the fields where they are weakest and in which, on this occasion, they had not distinguished themselves; and he exclaimed that "even their names showed imagination," because they called the merry-go-round a "gay wheel," though I should have thought that "merry-go-round" was better. We had stopped to watch a typically Russian stunt which *did* show some imagination: a gigantic imitation horse, rigged up between two trees, which at intervals would rear and plunge forward as if to trample on the crowd. The people would laugh

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nd get out of its way and stand there for long periods watching : and trying to figure out how it worked.

When we started to walk again, we found we had lost our companions. We looked for them, but it seemed to be hopeless. The Armenian writer and I decided we needed a drink. He had just come from Soviet Armenia, which he had visited for the first time and in which he seemed to have been disappointed. He had had, he said, no feeling at all of returning to a fatherland: the only Armenians he had liked were the kind who came to America and they were just like the ones he knew at home.—After considerable struggling and waiting in line, we succeeded in getting sandwiches and vodka, and consumed them standing up. A man who had been hanging around behind us came forward and spoke to us in English. He said he had worked in America. The Armenian asked him whether he wasn't ever homesick. The man said, Yes, he had liked it over there. And doesn't it mean something to be an American?" The Armenian pressed him eagerly. "Don't you really feel that an American is better than anybody else?" We gave the man some vodka; and he asked us who we were, assumed we wanted to know about conditions, said that he could tell us more than anybody. He was a Dane and had the Danish self-conceit. He seemed to get very drunk and for some reason made us rather uncomfortable, and we had difficulty in getting rid of him.

Then we stopped outside a movie and considered going in for the next show. Another man who had been standing around, came up to us and spoke to us in English. He asked us what we thought of the Soviets—it wasn't up to our expectations, eh? He asked us whether we didn't find that Intourist overcharged us. The Armenian was innocent and open and told him that Intourist was terrible; the Russian-American thought it prudent to move the Armenian on.

The Russian and I were agreed after we left that the second

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man, anyway, was phony. In any case, we all decided that we didn't want to go to the movies. The Armenian still didn't understand why the Russian had wanted to get him away. "It's funny," he said, as we were walking toward the gate. "I was just trying to talk to them about their life here." And it later occurred to me that the Communist and I had probably had different suspicions—I, that the man was a GPU agent trying to provoke us to unfavorable criticism; he, that he was some kind of disloyal character trying to pour poison in our ear.—"I'm going to write a story about this," said the Armenian after a moment. "It's going to be called 'A Good Time Was Had by All.'"

Communoid: This word has been coined for a person who is not a Communist, but who tries to talk and act like one.

Free Day: rowing on the river. It was a delightful little river curling through the even green countryside, almost level with the grassy banks. On one side of the stream there were meadows, which stretched away to vague farms in the distance. The other side was lined with bushes, and there people were going in swimming. They wore very few clothes or none. The Russians are funny about this. At the *dacha* from which we had started, it was considered extremely improper to put bathing-suits on in the house and then walk to the river in them. It was evidently some ancient convention dating back, no doubt, to the era when women wore bathing-stockings. Wearing bathing-suits around the house was something, I was told, which was done only in summer resorts by the sea. What you were supposed to do here was to go down in your clothes to the river and get undressed in broad daylight on the bank, laying your clothes in the grass, which was always very wet from the last

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shower. Then you would put on bathing-suits if you had them or, if not, just go in naked. The different parties of bathers would usually make an effort to get a certain distance away from one another; but there were so many people today that this had become impossible, and the occasional gestures of modesty—the trunks and the brassières—had a perfunctory look, slightly comic.

And the people looked much better without their clothes: Moscow clothes at the present time are so much the same and so dreary that, in order to appreciate the Muscovites, you really have to see them nude: blond girls with white skin, thick round legs and marvelous big round breasts, who would flop off into the water like turtles; shaved-headed boys burned brown, with white behinds where they had been protected by bathing trunks before they decided not to bother with them any more. The Russians around this part of the country have never really learnt to swim—I suppose they are learning it now, along with other kinds of outdoor sport; but they were having a very good time. One man had put up a pup-tent; another had a shack on a cliff, and the people in passing rowboats were bantering him; another, with nothing but a jock-strap, was practicing physcultur all by himself in a field. A fisherman, short and fat, fished heavily and inexpertly; an elderly man and woman were sitting on some kind of box, facing away from one another and both reading the Moscow papers. A girl in a boat that passed us, suddenly blew a toy-whistle—which startled me: this kind of thing, which Americans do on all occasions, is so very rare around Moscow. But she was a Russian and did it only at long intervals—meditatively, as it were.—We watched the Vladivostok Express, very trim for a Russian train, crossing the railroad bridge and tooting away toward the East.

We went on past a beautiful herd of white goats which was grazing on the side where the meadows were, and came finally

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to falls and a dam which prevented us from going any further. We landed and pulled the boat up on the bank and stretched out on a fallen tree, taking the sun in our bathing-suits. There were crows and pies in the air; the birch leaves were light as fuzz. My companion called my attention to some slight almost weedlike trees which were wry and leaning askew. In that landscape, so gentle and level, even such slight distortions showed almost wildly grotesque. Presently it began to rain, as it always did at some time every day, and we decided to go in the water during the shower. There was a rudimentary landing of planks which had been built by the workers of a textile factory a little way back from the river; and we would plunge off this and climb back and run around, trying to keep warm. When the shower was over and the sun came out, we went back on our log like frogs. A militiaman made his patrol in the interests of preventing scandal. But the bushes were thick and served their purpose in concealing the almost naked white couples who occasionally disappeared among them; and, in the words of a certain Moscow writer who knows English extremely well and who had been telling me about the literary censorship, "nobody was incommoded."

—Yet this day, so easy, so charming, so fresh, had a background of basic discomfort. They were beginning not to want me at the *dacha*, where they had at first entertained me with such hospitality. The other boarders had complained to my friends that they were seeing too much of a foreigner. Who was I? What was I up to? My friends weren't quite sure themselves. I found that they were coming to shy at the most commonplace questions on my part. Today, when we got back to the house, they parked me in an arbor at one side where the other boarders would not see me. I never went to the *dacha* again.

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The atmosphere of fear and suspicion is really pretty oppressive. It has evidently become more tense since the Kirov assassination. A foreigner cannot talk to them about politics at all—least of all, about the Kirov affair. If you venture to ask anybody about it, they either refer you to the official statements, which are certainly extremely implausible, or start to explain and then break down, protesting that it is all very difficult for a foreigner to understand. If Americans discuss these matters at a gathering where there are Russians present, the Russians pick up books and begin to read. I came away from Russia knowing almost as little of Russian politics as I had when I had arrived.

Of course, it is no worse than Hollywood (though the penalties—death and deportation—are greater). Stalin and Kaganovitch are hardly more sacred names in Moscow than Schulberg and Thalberg on the Coast. And anyone who has ever observed how persons who have been irreverent and full of ideas in the East are reduced to discretion and dullness as soon as they connect with their studios in Hollywood, will not be too hard on intelligent Russians who refer you to *Pravda* for politics. Hollywood is full of informers, too; so is Dearborn, Michigan. People are afraid to discuss Communism in Los Angeles and San Francisco. You cannot talk about organizing labor in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. And I remember that, on a visit to Washington during the happy early days of the New Deal, I noticed that people seemed nervous at pleasantries about the President or General Johnson, and that a radically-disposed friend with a Washington job with whom I was walking on the street and discussing the breakdown of capitalism, turned to me and said, with an apologetic smile: "I feel that you oughtn't to be saying such things."

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Boris Suvarin, in his book on Stalin, has brought forward a certain amount of evidence to show that denunciation has always been a favorite weapon of Stalin's. Stalin was under suspicion in Tiflis among the Social Democrats of his own party of having betrayed a political rival to the authorities; in prison, he instigated the killing of prisoners whom he charged with being stool pigeons, but against whom nothing was actually known, etc. Certainly, he is suspicious and intolerant where Lenin, through his own sincerity and his belief in the good faith of others, created that good faith itself. Was not the young officer who came to assassinate Lenin so moved by the "kind and simple face; face and eyes smiling at me, warm with tenderness and love," that he could not bring himself to throw his hand grenade?—and did not Lenin laugh over the incident and have the man released? He afterwards worked for the Soviet government. It has been said of Lenin that he never found it necessary to break any man of ability among his political associates. Did he not induce both Stalin and Trotsky to work for him at the same time?

Again, however, it is true that it is the Russian character itself which is partly to blame for the Terror. The Russians, that is, the traditional Russians, habitually evade responsibility: they are only just beginning to learn it, as they are learning motor-driving and swimming. And they do not trust one another because they do not trust themselves. How can they ever tell in Russia, one wonders, whether any given disaster is due to sabotage or incompetence? Do the persons involved themselves always know? How much of the Ramzin trial was a fairy-tale worked up for propaganda? Was it a fairy-tale in which Ramzin himself was finally persuaded to believe? The official indictments in cases of this kind sometimes sound fantastic to foreigners. A curious example of this uncertainty is the rumor that the crash of the *Maxim Gorky* was not the result of a foolish

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accident, but a terrible piece of sabotage. When anything goes wrong, apparently, there is likely to be an orgy of informing, each accusing his neighbor for fear of being implicated himself. The Kirov shooting was followed by six thousand deportations.

And with all this, in spite of their efforts to rationalize and humanize their punishments, they still carry over from the tsarist regime a good share of plain medieval cruelty—like the great old head-chopping bowl in Red Square used by the early tsars, which, instead of having been removed as a symbol of barbaric brutality, has simply been shifted to one side in order to make room for the traffic when the Shrine of the Iberian Virgin has gone the way of all relics.

One night I had a curious dream which put a fine point on the matter.—Russian grammar is full of anomalies. For example, the numerals two, three and four take nouns in the genitive singular whereas numerals over four take nouns in the genitive plural. I had asked my Russian teacher why this was so, and she had replied: "What you mean why it is so? That is the way it is!" I had also asked several other Russians, and nobody ever knew: it seemed to be one of those things like the high wooden collars on the horses and the railroad between Lenin-grad and Moscow that everybody took so much for granted that it never occurred to anyone to explain them. I found only one man who would even admit that there was anything illogical about it. Later, I discovered the explanation in Nevill Forbes's Oxford grammar, and the sources turned out to be so ancient, the course of development so queer (it began with a dual number and grew up with a mistake about that), as could have been possible only in Russia. (English spelling, of course, is just as irrational as Russian grammar; but, as an American, I don't feel responsible for it.)

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Well, one night I had a dream in which I thought I was questioning a Russian about some such peculiarity as this. I was immediately aware that I had aroused his suspicions. He looked at me coldly and demanded: "Why do you ask questions like that?"

I had unconsciously made a connection between the antiquated language forms and the antiquated political methods which have survived in such an incongruous way all mixed up with the Marxism. The Russians are sensitive about their system just as they are sensitive about the archaic features of their language. There is no country where you can wound so easily by the kind of criticism or question which makes up in other countries the ordinary substance of conversation between interested visitors and natives. Nobody else has got socialism yet; and the Russians (unless they are very deeply imbued with the new Marxist education) can never be quite sure that this, too, isn't something queer and Russian, or that the visitor doesn't think it is. And they can never be quite sure which elements of their life are due to reprehensible Russian backwardness and which to sound Marxist doctrine.

That is a great drawback of Russia as the first socialist country. The opponents of socialism can always put down to socialism anything they find objectionable in Russia. The advocates of socialism are betrayed into defending things which are really distasteful to them and which they have no business defending.

"Aristocrats": a play about pickpockets, monks, prostitutes and bourgeois saboteurs, reformed on the White Sea Canal. There is a scene where the bourgeois engineer, who has been busy on a big piece of construction, wonders whether he has been working for the Soviets or simply because he was interested in engineering. The two Russians with whom I had gone noddled

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to one another over this and said that it was very good and very Russian.—Certainly, it would be very unlikely that an American engineer would search his conscience thus: with us, practical activity so predominates that a socialist reorganization would, I should think, present itself in terms of certain practical ends to be accomplished, and I cannot imagine an American, once he was embarked on the project, brooding as to whether he were really sincere, whether he were politically correct, in working on a bridge or a dam. I don't believe we shall ever have "the ideology" in anything like the way the Russians have it. To substitute an American engineer in this scene is to reduce the idea to absurdity.

I had heard that Russians liked to break glasses, but I supposed this had ceased with the old regime. One evening, however, one of my guests began throwing wine-glasses against the wall. I did my best to stop her, because the glasses belonged to the family from whom I rented the apartment. When I asked her about it the next time I saw her, she said: "I don't know why it is, but when I drink I like to hear the sound!"—She also likes to drive fast in droshkies—which really is rather exciting, as you always think you are going to tip over.

(She is the only Russian I know who is willing to ride in droshkies. Everybody else firmly refuses. The trouble is, I have lately found out, that the drivers are supposed to be GPU agents.)

There is a decided hysterical edge to the upper reaches of Moscow life, just as there is in America. The Soviet world, at the antipodes to ours, reflects our danger and panic. Here, even by the tomb of Lenin, even within sight of the Kremlin walls, the fate of humanity itself must sometimes seem precarious. They must sometimes be haunted as we are by a terror lest

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all we have done and are doing may lose its meaning and value, and slide back to ruin again.

I asked an American doctor who had seen something of psychiatry in Russia whether it were true, as had been asserted, that some of the neuroses common in the West had disappeared in the Soviet Union. He said that he did not think it was true that the sum total of neuroses had lessened. The new marriage laws did not prevent neuroses based on sexual and marital maladjustment. With us, people marry for money; but in Russia a woman may marry and have children by a man she does not love merely in order to get a room to live in. And whereas the Russians were not tormented by the fear of losing money which plays such a role in America, they were equally badly bedeviled by the fear of losing their jobs—not of being out of work, of course, but of being transferred or demoted or sent to prison camps.

I saw a play called "Platon Krechet" which had had its opening in May the day after Stalin's speech to the graduates of the Red Army Academy and which was supposed to give a practical illustration of the new line there laid down. Hitherto, the official slogan had been, "Technique decides everything"; now the new slogan was to be, "Cadres decide everything." Cadres are the human framework on whom technical efficiency depends; and the idea is to direct more attention to the needs of the individual in his human relations with the group.

Platon Krechet is a brilliant young surgeon. He and the director of the hospital are in love with the same girl, an architect; and the director, who is a snake, tries to get Platon removed. The President of the city Soviet believes in and protects Platon. A visiting commissar is injured in a motor accident and is

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brought to the hospital on the point of death. Platon is summoned to operate on him, but he says at first he cannot go: he is on the verge of nervous collapse from emotional strain and overwork. He has just performed an operation on the father of the girl he loves, but has failed to save his life. He pulls himself together, however, and goes off to the hospital in a daze. He asks to be alone in the operating-room, but the director insists on going in with him. "No!" commands the President of the Soviet, with sudden terrible indignation and an authority above all directors: "You will stay outside!" (or words which convey that purport). When the young man finally emerges, he announces, "The Commissar of the People will live," and crashes insensible to the floor. In the last act, the President of the Soviet appears in the role of Santa Claus. The girl, who has been engaged to the director, tries to run away, but the President drags her back and hands her over to Platon. He produces and reads an order which says that Platon is to have two months' vacation *with his wife, Anna Nikolaevna* (or whatever the name was). Dance music is heard in the next room, and everybody is urged to enjoy himself.

This play represents in many ways a departure from previous policies. The Communist, the President of the Soviet, is supposed to be a good fellow with a sympathetic insight into his comrades: in the early part of the play, he tells Platon that he must not work himself to death and tries to persuade him to come away for a holiday, on which, he says, they will take along some vodka. A foolish and senile old doctor—as a member of the hospital cadre—is depicted in an amiable light: he refuses to sign the petition which the director is circulating for the removal of Platon Krechet. The director himself, instead of being sent, as I was told would certainly have been the case in a play of any previous period, to hard labor on the Solovetzky Islands, is merely transferred to another hospital and buoyantly

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comes in before going to shake hands with Platon Krechet, to acknowledge how badly he has behaved and to announce that he is leaving the past behind and embarking on a new and nobler life.

And at one point in the play, unexpectedly, Platon produces a violin and plays a well-worn selection to the surprise and admiration of the girl architect, who had not known about this artistic side of his nature. This exemplifies the new ideal of all-around human development and the new cultivation of the amenities.

I assisted, in a hotel bedroom, at a long and animated debate about the Communist policy in the "Black Belt." A highly intelligent Negro professor had come over to Moscow in the hope of getting a hearing from the Comintern Congress and persuading the Comintern to change its line on this question, and he was trying out his arguments beforehand on two American Communists from New York, who had only just arrived. It seemed to me that the professor had all the better of it. He was contending that "self-determination for the Black Belt" (a section of the South mapped out by the Communists, where the population is mostly Negro), based as it was on an analogy with the Ukraine, was totally unrealistic. What was the good of talking about "Negro culture"? The Negroes in the United States had no national language like the Ukrainians. Negro culture was simply a part of the general American culture. And what the Negroes really wanted was, not self-determination, not freedom for a national culture, but simply their rights as Americans. It would be a crime to incite a separatist movement which could only provoke a violent race war.—The Communists who were upholding the Black Belt policy were white and had never been in the Black Belt; their knowledge of the Negro question was exclusively derived from Harlem. They would answer: "If so-

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and-so were here, he'd be able to show you that your criticism is the result of your petty bourgeois background. I can't do it myself, but I'm sure that he'd be able to!" This refutation of an argument by an assumption that someone else would be able to refute it, seemed to me about the furthest point to which authoritarian thinking could be carried.

This discussion, my evening with the Armenian in the Park of Culture and Rest, and a number of other incidents, had made me feel as I had never done before, that being an American did mean something unique, that Americanism was a solid social entity which stood quite apart from Europe, belonging to a separate category rather than merely differing from it as the characters of the various European peoples differed from one another; and in some basic respects just as unlike what one finds in the Soviet Union as what one finds in the Western nations (though the Soviet Union has already succeeded in establishing a category of its own). The prime factor that sets us apart is the fact that we haven't got the past. And the American attitude, the American character, are more than rhetorical ideals; they are things which actually exist and which political thinking must reckon with. This Armenian of left sympathies in the Soviet Union showed that it was his deepest pride that he could call himself an American; this Negro, a member of the racial group which has been most cruelly discriminated against in America, only wanted to be an American and to enjoy what he regarded as American rights.

I often thought of F. in Russia. Her parents were Ukrainians from the neighborhood of Lemberg, and she had grown up among Slavic Americans. I had always attributed the sadness of her voice to the hardships and tragedies of her life, and her quietness and patience and sweetness to the gentleness of her

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own personality; but now I saw that it was a Russian voice with older hardships and tragedies behind it, and that what had attracted me in her, what had made her so inexplicably different from most working-girls of her kind in New York, was that she had remained profoundly Slavic. Yet I had taken her once to the Soviet film made from Gorky's "Mother," thinking a Russian picture would interest her, and had found that it had merely made her uncomfortable. During the scenes of squalor with which it opens, she had said to me with a bitterness that surprised me: "Now you see how my people live!" She had known squalor like that in New York, but she had acquired along with the new language the conviction that squalor was not American. Her family and she at that time, fur-workers and textile-workers, were living on home relief and relief-jobs and had been forced to leave their pleasant little houses in the neighborhood of Coney Island, where they had had front yards and sea-breezes and radios and kitchens and bathrooms. But I do not think it would ever have occurred to any of them to want to go back to the Ukraine, either under Polish or Soviet administration. America meant to them the kitchens and bathrooms which they had had once and might have again, and, even with the socialism of the Soviets, these things hardly existed in the Ukraine. The older generation of F.'s family belonged to Ukrainian social organizations and cherished a certain amount of Ukrainian patriotism. But F. was rather ashamed that her people had come from there.

Of course, terms like "Americanism" are dangerous because they can be and already have been used to cover up and justify all kinds of interests and aims. And it is true that the citizens of Rome went on being proud of the privilege of calling themselves Roman citizens long after Rome was dead. But certainly the case for socialism, which is merely the case for a high general standard of living secured by guaranteeing that people

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shall get the benefit of everything they produce, could be made out in the United States on the basis of American tradition and commonly accepted American conceptions. From this point of view, the socialist ideal is more natural to us than to the Russians.

Another torrent of rain in the Mala Bronnaya just as I was leaving someone's house. You had to wade over cobbles like a river-bed. A girl had taken off her sneakers and socks and was going through the water barefoot. She had pretty feet, smaller than most, and was very cheerful about it: a man in a doorway called after her, and she called something back, laughing.

I get the impression that love-affairs in Russia—and even among the Komsomol?—tend still to have the indeterminate and unpredictably capricious character of Evgeni Onegin's relations with Tatiana.

Stupendous jamboree given by the Journalists' Club for the Proletarian Division of the Red Army. The journalists and the Red Army are both among the privileged groups: they make more money, eat better food, have access to more reading matter and are able to get prettier wives, than the majority of the people in Moscow. And they did themselves in wonderful style.

The evening began about 9 with tea and enormous fancy pastry. Then there was an entertainment in three long and varied sections by the Proletarian Division and their families. They put on a very good show. It began with numbers by the children, who, like all Russians apparently, were born actors: there was a conventional fairy dance; a nerve-racking act by a

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little girl who twisted herself around and lay down on her back on the floor, while balancing a glass of water; and a play in which a boy and a girl went to sleep over a romantic phonograph record and thought they were traveling to Italy, but were waked up by their little comrades and recalled to the tasks of the day. Then there were peasant songs, operatic selections, recitations of Mayakovsky, and a whole series of those stamping and leaping dances beginning with numbers in which one or two figured and working up to a grand finale which I thought would break the platform down.

The officers and men performed together and were only to be distinguished from each other by the insignia on the officers' collars. The Commander was a quiet, agreeable and youthful-looking little man, who, if it had not been for his uniform, his military sunburn and his clean-shavenness, might have been taken for an artist or a doctor. Certainly the Red Army is quite unlike any other which has ever been seen in our time. Instead of being the least intelligent, they are among the most intelligent members of the community. They are given a special education, because their rôle is not merely to defeat but also to persuade the enemy, and they must understand their place in history and the real reasons why wars are fought. They read a special Red Army bulletin which gives them fuller information about world affairs than can be derived from *Izvestia* or *Pravda*. And they are the only democratic army in Europe.

During one of the intermissions, I talked to an American girl who had been working for some months in Moscow. She had been delighted by one of the songs which had been performed with traditional dance figures in old-fashioned peasant costume. The attitude of the young Red Army men and women in their impersonation of the village girls and swains had been like that of American young people dressing up at an amateur entertainment to sing "Jingle Bells" or "Oh, Susannah!" But

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the little American comrade, clear-eyed and ardent, said to me: "Wasn't that number fine? It's so like life on the collective farms!" The Russian who had brought me, a writer, whose special subject was collective farms, had just been explaining apologetically that the entertainment was aesthetically unsatisfactory because the folk art had died with the old life and could only be revived self-consciously while, on the other hand, nothing new had yet been evolved to take its place. It is possible in the center of Moscow to be as unrealistic about Russia as anywhere below Fourteenth Street.

After the entertainment, we went in to a tremendous banquet, which began with toasts and bugle flourishes and *zakusky* with wine and beer. The *zakusky* were the most copious I had even seen—and that is saying a good deal: I assumed they were the supper itself, and was staggered, after I had been eating on this assumption, to be confronted with a succession of further courses. It took several hours to serve them, and all the time a jazz orchestra played. Just before the last course but one, the lights were turned out and a movie commenced: a new German picture with a pretty Hungarian actress. Between reels, the ice-cream and the coffee came in.—I left about four in the morning, when the party was still going strong.

These superior groups in the Soviet Union are among the most attractive people in the world. and they seem to be among the happiest.

There is at present a whole hierarchy in Russia based on various degrees of ability and on different departments of service. The differences of income among them are, from the American point of view, very slight; but for Russia, they are relatively considerable.

Many people discover this with surprise and seem to assume that it must be a violation of the ideals of a socialist society.

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This is, of course, not the case. It was one of the prime contentions of Marx and Engels that socialist society could not be equalitarian. It would still have to follow in important respects the conformation of social organisms shaped by the specializations of capitalism. Different degrees of ability would be able to command different incomes. "This equal right (in socialist society)," says Marx in the "Critique of the Gotha Program," "is an unequal right for unequal work. It recognizes no class differences because every worker ranks as a worker like his fellows, but it tacitly recognizes unequal individual endowment, and thus capacities for production, as natural privileges." (A difficulty, indeed, in the Soviet Union seems to be to make the people in general desire a higher standard of living strongly enough to exert themselves to gain it. It is the purpose of the "culture" campaign to make people seek self-improvement.) And Lenin, on the eve of October, recapitulated, in "State and Revolution," the teaching of Marx and Engels on this point. It is true that it was attempted until recently to maintain a uniform salary for Communists; but now this has been abandoned, and Communists, like other people, are divided into several categories and paid in proportion to their services.

But Lenin himself had not only got outside class society, he had got also beyond the kind of society where inequalities of ability are unequally remunerated. I was told by the wife of a commissar of her calling on Krupskaya in the Kremlin. There were no comforts in the apartment, she said; no ornaments, except pictures of Lenin. Preoccupied from her student days with workers' education and agitation, after a lifetime of meager and impermanent lodgings in all the countries of Europe, having lost long ago with Lenin, in concentration on their all-demanding vigilance for the fate of human society as a whole, any sense

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of her own right as a human being to beauty or recreation or rest, now, at sixty-six, her cause brought to victory, with those who had never had anything and whom she had labored to set free enjoying their little luxuries and amenities and herself at last lodged in security under the golden spires of the Kremlin, she seemed never to have noticed her furniture, never to have looked at her walls. To such a deliverance from material things the materialist conception of history had led! It was characteristic of Lenin as of Marx—it was the mainspring of the whole Marxist system—that he was impatient of a world in which the things that men needed were reckoned in terms of money and went always to the highest bidder. And he insisted, in the very act of seizing power, that all he was doing was being done in the name of a day when neither capitalist dollars nor socialist rubles would have value. The Soviet Union are still far from that day; the people still work for money, and even the governing groups still work for more money than their neighbors. But they know that their state is not dedicated, as the capitalist governments are, to the mere preservation of the status quo in the interests of a propertied class. It is based on the bare walls and plain furniture of Lenin's and Krupskaya's lodgings.

I had gone to say good-by to an American friend at a hotel and found there a Russian whom I also knew. We had some brandy, and I told them about the Red Army party. There had been an old-timer with a big black beard who had made a resounding speech, and his image and echo were still with me. Presently, apropos of nothing but the brandy, I repeated one of his phrases: "*Ili sotsializm ili fashizm!*" ("Either socialism or fascism!"). "Don't say that!" exclaimed the Russian. "What is there objectionable about it?" I asked. "It's from a speech at the Red Army entertainment." "Never talk politics in hotel

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rooms!" he said—and added, "Microphone!" I left almost immediately afterwards and did not see him again, so never had a chance to ask him why he had been worried by what I had said. I am still wondering why a phrase which certainly represents one of the commonplaces of current Soviet thought should be all right for a Communist speech but dangerous for a private conversation.

V. Volga Idyll

TRAIN from Moscow to Gorky. There was a young student who was designing gliders. When I told him that I was an American, he asked at once whether I were an engineer. An Alaskan who spoke Russian in my compartment was able to talk to him about his subject, and the boy leaned over excitedly, holding out a book of diagrams and eager for information about what was being done in the United States. Two younger boys in blue uniforms and blue peaked caps, with round pink sun-baked faces, lay stretched on their stomachs in their bunks with their arms folded under their chins, listening with solemn attention. I had never seen illustrated so vividly before their intensity about what they call "technique." Finally, the boys fell asleep; but in the semi-darkness with its single feeble light, the student still went on talking passionately about glider-designs.

Gorky (Nizhni-Novgorod). Slow old sprawling provincial town dating from the thirteenth century: white fragments of an ancient Kremlin; quiet streets of blinding summer sun; a big white state bank built by the Tsar, bristlingly and grimly ornate; people better-looking than in Moscow, good color, with-

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out the city blight.—The girl in the principal book-shop wouldn't sell me a volume of the new edition of Lermontov, apparently for no better reason than that it was part of their window display.

We bought cherries in a market-place full of people. There was a man sitting out of doors and embroidering tapestry animals on a frame: clumsy swans with very thick necks and a blue oriental-looking tiger, surrounded by orange butterflies and pink roses. I bought the tiger for sixty rubles: the man said it had taken him months, and it was really quite a handsome production. I can still see him looking up from under the vizor of his cap when I asked him what he wanted for the tiger, with deep-set limpid brown eyes which were at the same time as piercing as his needle.

Much squalor, large sections of the town gone to seed, as on the street where Gorky was born—the usual wooden fretwork of lace. One steep little cobbled street was scooped out by the rain like a gutter and grass-grown along the trough. An old woman who limped carrying horizontally before her an acquiescent gray goat; another, younger woman carrying a squealing little pig. A young sorrel horse, with no harness and all alone, had just turned in to the drive which runs along and looks down on the river: he was simply out for a walk.

They have a mania for renaming places. This is the naïve side of the Revolution. Surely it is a great mistake to name so many things after Gorky; old names like those of Nizhni-Novgorod and the street called the Tverskaya in Moscow, which have no tsarist connotations, but simply recall the early map of Russia, might better have been left as they were. Even Leningrad is still Peter's city and might better still bear his name. Besides, a whole country of Gorky-villes and Stalin-villes, as

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Russia seems in a fair way to become, with a Karl Marx street in every town and village, tends to have the effect of making Gorky, Marx and Stalin commonplace.—Yet these cities belong to them now and never belonged to them before; and they have a right to name them what they please.

The Volga. Enormous, passive, wide open and smooth, spreading down the whole middle of Russia: a female river. The steamboat, winding its way among shoals, wanders all over the surface. Flat banks—fields of yellow grain—an occasional sharp isolated steeple. Sandy shore, a formless river.

One of their great phrases is “Bourgeois prejudice.” When the elderly waitress on the boat was asked as a joke by one of the tourists for lemon to put in the tea (they haven’t been importing lemons), she retorted, in the same spirit: “Bourgeois prejudice!”

I stopped over a boat at Ulyanovsk in order to see the Lenin Museum. I got in about four in the morning and climbed up the steep bank of the Volga and spent the night at a flophouse where travelers are put up between boats. The mud was deep and sticky, like the slime at the bottom of a pond, and it made the ground as slippery as if it had been covered with ice. It was hard even to walk on the steps.

When I awoke, after everybody else was up, I lay looking at the girl who was making the beds. She was pretty, a *blondinka*, with bobbed fair reddish hair. She was also awfully nice. She told me that I wouldn’t have to walk up the hill because there was a man with a horse coming to take me.

The man was an extraordinarily nice old Bolshevik with a

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brown beard and large brown eyes: he was the humane-eyed rather than the sharp-eyed type. It was raining a fine dense rain, and he tried to loan me a rain-coat, which I very foolishly declined. So we started up the hill in the old backless droshky, which was shaken by the cobbles so violently that everything I saw seemed flickering and jerking like a bad old-fashioned film.

At the top, the little provincial city, which is said once to have been so beautiful from the river, seemed like a place which had been forgotten and left behind up there. Like many towns which are not centers of industry, Ulyanovsk has been neglected by the recent Soviet programs. It looked to me not merely down at the heels since the days of the Karamzins, the Goncharovs, the Kerenskys and the Ulyanovs; it seemed, on this day of mud and drizzle, actually to be decomposing. I stopped for breakfast at a shabby-looking restaurant on a main business street where everything looked shabby. All I could seem to get was black bread without butter and bad coffee. I asked for an omelet, and, after some demur—they said at first they couldn't make one—they produced a kind of tasteless fried custard.

I got back in the droshky, and the driver drove me out to the early home of Lenin. I wondered on the way whether a big church they were knocking to pieces was the cathedral in which Kerensky tells us he used to sing like a little angel in the choir while that little fiend Vladimir Ilyich was sitting in the congregation and doubtless making game of the whole thing.

The Ulyanov house (of which more elsewhere) was a surprise after the rest of Ulyanovsk. With its sobriety and shining cleanness, its fine mahogany furniture, its maps and music and books, it reminded me of the houses of cultivated New Englanders as I used to see them in my youth. So that was what it had been like, the life of the educated middle class out of

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which Lenin had come—breaking out of the mold himself and leaving the old town where he had been bred, distinguished by its learned names, to disintegrate in the rain. Now no doubt there were only a few of them left, lurking in their damp rooms among books and old pieces of furniture. For today the stream of civilization was running in another channel. To have changed the course of the Volga would certainly have been less astounding!

—The driver took me all over town and back to the flop-house again. He shook hands with me at parting and wouldn't accept a kopek—whether by arrangement with Intourist or because he didn't want to take money for showing the house of Lenin, I don't know.

I went in. There was nobody there but the blond girl. I prepared to kill time till the next boat and sat down at a little table to write. But the blond girl had made all the beds and now had nothing to do, and she picked up a guitar from one of the beds and sat down on a bed and began strumming. I said that the weather was bad, and she agreed that it was very bad. It was raining harder now, and the little wooden shacks outside the window looked peculiarly dismal and raw. I asked her whether the guitar were hers and she said no, it belonged to one of the transients. She came over and sat near me and went on strumming. I asked her to sing something, but she said no.

I gave up trying to write. A great liking for this girl began to warm me—the kind of liking which arises, without utterance or special occasion, in the presence of the Russian combination of sensitiveness with simplicity and candor. Her hair, as I have said, was fair and reddish, a deeper shade in some places than in others; and she had pale rather weak blue-green eyes, eyebrows which seemed to have been plucked and quite a little yellow mustache on her upper lip. Her figure was rather thick, and her hands and arms were tanned. She said that she was

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twenty-one, that she wasn't married and had no sweetheart. Her name was Claudia Dmitrievna.

There was a checkerboard, and I suggested we might play. She protested that she was terribly bad, but I said that I was, too; and as a matter of fact, we were pretty evenly matched, neither of us was very good. The rules in Russia are different from ours and this made it disconcerting at first, as Claudia Dmitrievna and I were acting on different assumptions; but after I got the hang of the game, it seemed to me, in the give and take of the moves, that we were getting to understand each other intimately. It would be with a shock that I would realize, when we would stop and begin to talk again, that our verbal communications were imperfect. It seemed to me that the sympathy I felt for her must actually be pulsing through the pieces. She was so gentle, so amiable, so natural, so immediately responsive to everything. There was something about her which seemed stolidity, yet she would constantly surprise and delight me by the quick coming to life characteristic of a certain type of Russian woman. It was a kind of sudden flurry of animation, volatile, emphatic, smiling, which would be aroused by so trivial an incident as my moving one of her men by mistake ("*Eto moy!*") And when she saw that the odds were against her—what also seemed to me peculiarly Russian—she would begin throwing away all her pieces.

We went on playing game after game. And she, I knew, would have gone on indefinitely, as they do with all intellectual pursuits, if I, with my American restlessness, had not decided it was time for something different.

I went out in the quagmire-like mud and the rain and, visiting the riverfront booths where skinny children and pigs were poking about, bought some sausage, some black bread, some bad beer, some sour Volga apples, and some candies in fancy paper.

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We ate the food together, though Claudia Dmitrievna wouldn't drink any beer. If it hadn't been for my bringing these things, she would never, so far as I could see, have done anything about getting any meals during the whole of her twenty-four hour shift. She evidently did all her eating at home.

Two men had come into the room: they were working on a "buffet" to adjoin the flophouse; and I offered them some of the food. They smelt the sausage before they ate it, and one of them asked me what I thought about war. He thought war was coming soon. Then they went on with their work and, having finally put up a door in the doorway into the buffet, closed it with themselves on the other side, so that Claudia Dmitrievna and I were again thrown in on one another. She had been strumming the guitar more or less all the time without ever exactly arriving at a tune—it was an accompaniment to a song which was never sung; and she seemed prepared to go on strumming it interminably. Nothing except hours of work ever begin or end in Russia. Their time behaves so differently from ours. It is of the essence of Russian time that the "imperfective aspect" of their verbs, the form which represents an action as going on, should be the norm from which the "perfective aspect," which represents the action as completed, is usually a variation; and that the perfective in the present form, which ought to mean that an action is being completed, should always have a future meaning. I had been wondering before what I should do to fill the time till the boat left that night, but now I was content to let the day slip along with the chords of Claudia Dmitrievna's guitar. I asked her again to sing, but she refused. She sat on the edge of the bed, looking very attractive, I thought, with one of her feet in its blue sneaker turned in under her on the floor.

Presently her sister and brother came in. They were both younger than Claudia Dmitrievna. The girl was seventeen and

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was dressed in an old dark dress much too long for her, which had probably been handed down from a whole series of older sisters, and what seemed to be a pair of boy's shoes. She was pretty, too, in a less-developed way, and had put spots of cold cream on her chapped lips. Claudia Dmitrievna explained that her sister knew the words of the songs from "Merry Fellows" which I had asked about, and the younger girl immediately sat down and wrote them out without hesitating a second: five stanzas of one song and two of the other, with the appropriate refrains. Then she wrote her full name at the top, Praskovaya Dmitrievna Lazareva, and put a fancy monogram at the bottom. One of the songs was called "*Serditse*," and I asked what that meant. Claudia Dmitrievna, in one of her gusts of animation, pressed her hand under her left breast; and when I said, "Oh, yes, I understand!" they all exclaimed in a general gust, "He understands! he understands!" Claudia Dmitrievna's gesture seemed to me natural and lovely, and "*serdise*" seemed a beautiful word for "heart."

Another older girl came in, capable-appearing and with strong dark eyes. She was wearing some kind of badge and, unlike Claudia Dmitrievna and her sister, was evidently the more serious type of young Russian. She asked me where I worked in America—in Russia they always ask you where you work, instead of where you live; and whether "life was better in America or here." They wanted to see my foreign money, which excited them very much. They cried, "Silver!" They had never seen any before. They seemed a little bit abashed when I showed them the head on a florin and said it was the English tsar. They asked me so many questions and I had so little Russian to answer them that I presently became exhausted. Feeling this with the incomparable Russian sensitiveness and acting with the Russian lack of explicitness, they all suddenly melted away

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(except Claudia Dmitrievna). And I lay down on my cot for a nap.

When I woke up, it was getting dark. It was Claudia Dmitrievna who had wakened me. All alone in the gathering dark with her guitar, she had finally begun to sing: one of those strange little old-fashioned-sounding songs, apparently simple and gay, to which the minors of the old Greek modes in the enormous spaces of Russia have given something wild and sad. I was enchanted: I listened till she stopped, then called out to her that the song was "wonderful." She answered, "What? what?", as they always do, and came out of her little office. I told her how much I liked the song and stretched out my hand, as she came near me. She gave me her hand and let me hold it, but in a curious unresponsive way, as if nobody had ever taken it before and she did not know what to expect. She simply stood there: I kept it for a moment, and then pressed it and let it go. She did not return my pressure or allow her hand to linger: she simply allowed me to relinquish it, and stood for a moment yet, and then went back to her room.

I got up and washed at a tap in the wall and asked Claudia Dmitrievna for a towel. She had done nothing about giving me one before after the sausage in the afternoon when I was drying my hands on my handkerchief, though she had been using one herself. But now that I made the request, she promptly and cheerfully produced a clean one. It never would have occurred to her that she was there in order to give the travelers service. Such attitudes exist in Russia only among the people in Intourist hotels, where they have been cultivated artificially or left over from the old regime.

She was reading. I asked her about the book, and she immediately shut it up and brought out of a drawer of her desk an old volume of "Crime and Punishment," which she began to read instead—either to show me that she was capable of more

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serious tastes or out of simple native volatility. I asked her to go over the words of "*Serdtsse*" with me. She did so, and when she had finished, much struck by the complicated monogram which her sister had made at the bottom of the page, she picked up a pencil and for some minutes became absorbed in an attempt to reproduce it. I took her hand in mine and examined it and told her that all Soviet girls were strong. She replied, without any kind of coquetry, that she didn't know about that, but that she was strong herself because she'd done a lot of work. She held up her right arm and clenched her fist and made me feel her muscle, which was certainly extremely hard. I tried to kiss her other hand, but she took it away and said, "No!"

A little dampened by this, I presently left her to read and went in and took another nap. This time it was night when I was awakened by the low voices of a young man and a young woman going to bed in the beds opposite mine. When they were in bed, the man stretched out his hand across the gap between the cots, and the woman gave him her hand, and he held it till they went to sleep. I decided to get up and go in and visit Claudia Dmitrievna again. I found her in her little room, lying down with a blanket over her on a hard wooden cot with no mattress. I thought I would sit up and read till the boat got in at 2:30. Claudia Dmitrievna went straight to sleep and snored with such shattering violence that I could not keep my mind on the book. It got colder and I went back to bed.

I slept till 2:15 and then sprang up, much alarmed for fear I had missed the boat. I said "*Do svidaniya*" to Claudia Dmitrievna, who woke up as I came through the office, and kissed her good-by on the forehead; and made a dash for the dock. When I had stumbled down the hill through the mud, now considerably hardened with the cold, I found the gate locked and no one around. I went back to the flophouse in consternation, and Claudia Dmitrievna called up the dock and

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found out that there would be no boat that night—there wouldn't be another boat till 2 o'clock the next morning, twenty-four hours away. Now I could go back to bed, she told me tranquilly, as if the news were certain to be welcome—and not have to worry any more about catching the boat that night. I don't think it would ever have occurred to her that I might have felt impatience at the delay.

So there we were again. We sat gazing at one another. After a moment, I began to pet her. I patted and stroked her cheeks and neck, and she sat there looking straight at me with her frank and gentle eyes. This went on for a considerable time but didn't seem to lead to anything, and I began to feel as if I were patting a pony. I stopped and said good-night and went to bed.

In the morning, the weather was wonderful. The sun was out and the mud drying up. We leaned on the railing of the porch and looked down on the unrippled Volga, where the mists were cleared away so that you could see the wooded further bank. I asked her whether she liked to swim and she replied with her usual vivacity that she did like it very much and that that was how her arms had got so brown. Today was her day off, she told me: I asked her what she was going to do, and she said that she and her brothers and sisters were going to the kino and to dance. I found that I could resign myself easily to another day in Ulyanovsk: I would ask Claudia Dmitrievna to go in swimming with me and perhaps take her to the movies in the evening. I asked her whether she were sure that the boat would not be in till two the next morning. She told me that she had just called the dock and that it would be in at one that afternoon. I went off to get something for us to eat, and when I came back, she was gone.

I wandered down to the dock, and there I found her younger sister in her men's shoes and long dark dress. Praskovaya Dmitrievna told me that the boat would be in at ten and that

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she was hanging around for the loading. I didn't believe her about the boat, but stayed around the dock myself. After a time, I went up to her again to be sure I hadn't misunderstood. "It's coming now," she said: it was nowhere near ten yet. I didn't believe this either; but she took me up to the top deck of the floating boatlike wharf, and there, sure enough, was the steamboat coming around the bend. We sat there and went through "*Serdise*" again, and she asked me to read her some English because she wanted to hear how it sounded.

The boat came in, and I lost her. When I looked for her, to say good-by, she wasn't there. But she suddenly appeared at the gangplank just as the steamer was pulling out. I stretched out my arm and shook hands with her, as we were moving away from the dock, and called out what nice girls they were.

The Volga again: white clouds which seem painted in relief on the blue, as in the skies of the American Southwest—or clouds in gray ink, outlined on a surface of gray. The eternal flat green shores—on the third day, low pelted hills, reflected dull green in the water—one little town with thatched roofs, all the towns were gray and unpainted.

There was a very pretty woman in the second class, small, with gay dark eyes and a way of doing her hair in a pompadour which reminded me of the early nineteen hundreds. She was the type of Russian woman who, though young, is not the Soviet woman. And there was a man who would sit down at the piano and run on with old popular tunes which reminded me of the same period as the pompadour. One of the tunes was "Hiawatha," and he made me exceedingly nervous by playing it with all the wrong emphasis, so that it sounded tinkly, minor

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and Russian, instead of two-stepping with the marked American rhythm.

One day we stopped for an hour or more at a dismal manufacturing town called Volsk. Everything was gray with cement dust. Men and boys were plunging into the muddy water from a prodigiously high diving platform, with no form but plenty of courage. Presently I saw in the water the lady with the vivacious eyes, who was doing a very feminine breast-stroke and who shot back at the people on the steamer what used to be called a gay and flashing glance. When she got out, she walked along the pier like a bird on small-boned ankles and feet, her body bending forward from the waist so that her big and shapely hips stuck out behind—like old postcards of bathing girls.

She and the man who played the piano contributed to an impression I had had before: that the isolation of the Soviet Union has had the effect of preserving within its boundaries old habits, fashions and tastes which have disappeared in the rest of the world, like the prehistoric animals in Conan Doyle's story surviving on their high plateau. The innovations in Russia have been mainly in the field of mechanical technique; and it is curious and rather charming to observe that in certain other respects the Russians are still back in 1914, when they were first cut off from Europe. You may hear any night on any radio in Moscow, in any restaurant or café where there is an orchestra, that old pretty and sentimental waltz which is imbued with such nostalgic value in the third act of "The Cherry Orchard."

In the first class, I met a young couple who represented something altogether different. They were two prize aviation students who were getting a two months' vacation and the best that Volga boats could provide. They were both exceedingly handsome: she a very dark Rumanian, he a very blond gray-eyed

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Russian—"a contrast, light and dark!" he pointed out to me. They were shining, enthusiastic, well-dressed, he approximating to something American. They invited me into their cabin and gave me apples, candy and cakes, the last of which she had made herself and which he was very proud of her making. They had only been registered—that is, married, a year. He told me that he and she were as "one," holding up one finger to make it plain. He asked me whether we had love in America—with a certain amount of archness, to be sure, but—influenced, as he evidently was by the recent official policy of encouraging the domestic affections and making it possible for husbands and wives to take their vacations together—not without an implication that love was among the special socialist benefits conferred by Comrade Stalin on the inhabitants of the Soviet Union.

We spoke of the different classes on the boat, he calling them "classes" at first, then remembering and calling them "categories."

He asked me whether I were a friend of the U.S.S.R., and in the conversation which followed, I told him that I had stopped off at Ulyanovsk to see the Lenin Museum. "Lenin," the boy replied, "yes, Lenin was a great leader. He loved the people very much. All the country people have pictures of him up in their houses." I realized that the Revolution was already a long time ago for the young people of their generation. For me, Lenin was a great contemporary; for them, he was already on his way to become a sort of Russian Washington or Lincoln.

I sometimes used to go down to walk through the third class in the hold. The people were not traveling very comfortably; they were carrying all their belongings on their backs and sleeping on the cargo or the floor. But they did not look ill-fed or unhappy. On the contrary, they had rosy country faces. There

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were a great many musical instruments among their baggage; and one little half-naked boy was playing a balalaika—as the children in the first-class saloon were playing the piano: by ear.

The fifth day of the voyage down the Volga gets to be rather boring: it is all so much alike. One moderate variation: a ribbon of liver-colored cliffs, on top of which was scattered a livid wooden village without human color or shape; then, more liver-colored cliffs, cut into chunks by the rain, and the chunks cut into slices, above the browner liver-colored water.

VI. Odessa: Counter-Idyll

STALINGRAD. A new town, an industrial center, at the opposite pole from places like Ulyanovsk. Life seems attractive in Stalingrad. The big tractor plant is certainly very different from anything to be seen in Detroit. I had wondered in Lenin-grad and Moscow where were the strapping exuberant Soviet workers of whom one saw photographs and films; but I found them in Stalingrad. These people are another race from the short formless Muscovites (of small stock in the first place, I suppose, and further stunted by the malnutrition of the years of revolution and war). The Stalingrad tractor workers are peasants just in from the fields, and—though it is true that they have been having a certain amount of difficulty in learning to manipulate the machinery—they are certainly the handsomest lot of people I have ever seen inside a factory. The woman workers are the only women whom I have ever seen look attractive in working clothes: they wore overalls and sleeveless jerseys, many of them pink or red, which stretched tight over

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their superb breasts. They would examine the clothes of the women tourists and ask them about the materials and how much they cost in America.

The pace was much more leisurely than Detroit, the aspect of things much less grim. At Ford's, for example, the drop forges, one of the most dangerous departments of the plant, give the effect of an antechamber to Hell; visitors are not taken to see them. At Stalingrad, the drop forges seemed further apart and were certainly much better ventilated. And the men there work only six hours.—When I visited the tractor factory, it was noon, and they had simply stopped the conveyor, and everybody had gone off to lunch—a thing inconceivable at Ford's!

Surely nothing could be more absurd than the objection sometimes heard to the Soviets that they are headed for a civilization overmechanized and materialistic like that of the United States—though the Soviets' own propaganda for mechanization and their boasts of their mechanical progress have given encouragement to this. The truth is that, in spite of the Russian enthusiasm for emulating American technique, it would take decades, even with the Stakhonov version of the American Taylor Plan, for them to approximate American efficiency; and the whole genius of the people is so different from our practical Anglo-Saxon genius that their carrying these tendencies to extremes seems to me impossible to imagine. They may surely be pardoned at present for their anxiety to provide themselves with the necessities and a few of the comforts of life!

After the spectacle of the conveyor which had stopped for lunch, the American tourists in the party were continually making me feel the difference between Americans and Russians. There was an old lady who insisted on lecturing the guide for having lost some of the members of the party; and, on our way

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back to the hotel in the bus, another lady insisted that the driver should stop in order that two little boys who had been hanging on for the ride might not be carried too far from home—just as I myself, on the Volga boat, had gone to considerable trouble to expel from the saloon a bird which had got in and which was making a most piteous and exasperating plaint, while the Russians, at their interminable card games, were not in the least concerned. No Russian would have thought of doing any of these things. It was the American instinct to control, to check up, to see to it that things were done thoroughly, that they were brought to a decisive conclusion.

This old lady who had scolded the guide seemed to be a little cracked. She had eyeglasses, some rouge on her cheeks and an old-fashioned motoring veil tied around a straw hat and knotted under her chin; and she talked all the time in a loud nasal voice that cut right through everything and everybody. She came from Springfield, Illinois. People at home had opposed her going to Russia, but what had made her come was a book she had read about women in the Soviet Union; and now that she had come, she was enthusiastic. When you considered that Roosevelt back home had them throwing their hogs into the Mississippi! And she always said that she felt safer in Russia: in Springfield, there was civil war between the Progressive Miners, the U.M.W.A. and the authorities, so that you were afraid to go out on the streets. Why, somebody at the Capital mine had turned a machine-gun on the crowd, and they never would tell who it was! If Abraham Lincoln could see Springfield now! She predicted a revolution within fifteen years. The only hope was that the Republicans might nominate some good clean man whom the people could really trust!

She was traveling first class and had hired a special guide to

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go with her. She bossed the Russians around with benevolent condescension and oppressed the other tourists with monologues which suggested that she was suffering from the neurosis known as "total recall." When I saw them, at a later stage of the journey, the special guide had in her eyes a look of mute unspeakable suffering. Yet I liked this old lady: she could never have been produced by any other country than America.

I found myself, traveling "soft," with a lady tourist from Prague, a Turk from the Embassy in Moscow and a Russian boy who was some sort of engineer and had been working on the Moscow subway. The Turk was a most amiable man and had rescued the Czecho-Slovak lady, a little Germanic woman with spectacles, who spoke excellent French, from the discomforts of the "hard" carriage. He answered her questions about Russia with, it seemed to me, intelligence and sympathy. She said that things were terribly bad in Czecho-Slovakia, that people were frightened of fascism and that the result of Czech nationalism since the depression had been that the German inhabitants were being turned out of their jobs. She wondered when the other countries would learn to straighten out their economy sensibly the way the Russians had. She was one of a whole group whom I encountered, beginning with the Englishman on the boat, of middle class people dependent on their salaries, in jobs which required special training, who, without any Marxist ideology, had been coming to have doubts about the capitalist system and were using their vacations to come over and take a look at what was going on in Russia. She confided to me later, when I was taking her around, that she wanted so much to hear "The Comintern song." It turned out that she meant "The International." I asked whether she had

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never heard it in Prague. Oh, no, she said, she was sure that they would never allow it to be sung.

The boy who had worked on the Metro had the same kind of effervescence as Claudia Dmitrievna and represented in its most glowing form the Boy Scout side of young Russia. He had a translation of Upton Sinclair's "King Coal" and Mayakovsky's poems, and he said that Upton Sinclair was a great writer and Mayakovsky a very great poet. I saw him later in the conductor's compartment sitting in his undershirt between the conductor and the trainman, and reading Mayakovsky aloud to them. The conductor, an exceedingly cunning little green-eyed butterball, had just taken her uniform off and was engaged in touching up her face; and the trainman, an old bird with a lantern and a mustache, was sitting and smiling at the humor and doing his best to get it.

Rostov-on-the-Don. The further south you go, the pleasanter the cities seem. The people are taller, easier, freer, better-looking, better-dressed; and they seem to be enjoying themselves as they never do in Moscow. There are gay little European parks in Rostov, with fountain spray, shiny white statues, fragrance of large red flowers, secluded walks among the shrubbery with lovers immobile on benches and little bright-lighted restaurants lively with Viennese music. (Also, written up over gates and worked out in flowerbeds, the new slogan: "Cadres decide everything.")

When, however, the Czecho-Slovak lady and I went with pleasant anticipation to a ballet performance in one of the public gardens, we did not find precisely what we had expected. It was a Soviet specialty called "Plastic Ballet," which turned out to consist of Physcultur versions of old chestnuts by Grieg, Brahms and Liszt. The dancers had the muscles of gymnasts

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and were almost completely naked. Like the production of "Romeo and Juliet" at the Theatre of the Revolution, it was an attempt to make love attractive without yielding an inch to romance and without slighting the need for effort.

As I was walking back to the hotel one night, I heard wild and thrilling strains of Gypsy singing coming out through the open windows of a restaurant. I stopped and found that other people had gathered and were listening outside a window. In a moment a man had reached in with a rough uncontrollable gesture and snatched back the heavy red portière which kept the people outside from seeing. Just inside the window were a party dining at a table, who were now exposed to the street; but they could not, as they undoubtedly would have done anywhere else in Europe, make the headwaiter close the curtain or even stare angrily at the intruders. They could not; and I am by no means sure that they had even the impulse to do so.

We visited one of the homes where prostitutes were being reclaimed. There were two of these in Rostov: one for girls with venereal disease and one for girls who were all right. They were doing various kinds of work, and when they were cured were given jobs. Some of them seemed depressed. There was one rather pretty little dark one who stood in the doorway as we were leaving: I smiled at her, and she responded with a sweet, pleased and childlike smile, which followed us, as we drove off, till we were out of sight down the street.—Visit to a maternity hospital: they took us through the wards and into the room where the newborn babies were—which last they shouldn't have done and never would have done in America, as the voices of the tourists woke the babies up. They even

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brought us into the delivery room, where two women were being delivered. This shocked the Czecho-Slovak lady, and we all of us withdrew at once. But the nurse only broadly smiled and asked whether it nauseated the ladies: they have no feeling about anything of that kind.

We paid rather a burlesque visit to another collective farm. The old lady from Springfield was simply crazy about everything, and when the director gave us all ripe red tomatoes, she told him that she was coming right over to live there. The director, when this had been explained to him, bowed gallantly and said, "Please!" In the kitchen, a bright Jewish girl from New York, who had been sitting with the old lady in the car and who had been taking a good deal of punishment, pretended to collapse on a table. The old lady at once showed the keenest solicitude and wanted to know what was the matter. The girl's boy-friend, not so rude as the girl, told her he had hurt the girl's feelings. The old lady, well in the van on the way to the next point of interest, called back to the girl in her piercing Western voice: "Now, let me tell you something, Honey Love!—I'm an old lady and I can tell you that you'll get a whole lot more out of life if you don't let those things upset you!"

In a vineyard, we met a nice-looking old man, whom the Alaskan questioned in Russian. The old man was extremely dissatisfied and complained that things were being done all wrong. He evidently belonged to the class who had suffered from the collectivization; and I suppose that he was being forced by new methods to violate the habits of a lifetime. The Alaskan led him on, and he became more and more voluble on the subject. The guide, much embarrassed, took us away.

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On the wall of the children's nursery, there was a row of little toothbrushes hung up with a sign which said, "Be sure to go over your teeth three times." How many of those children's parents had ever had a toothbrush at all?

The Don flowing slow and even between its level banks.—We think in America that Kansas is flat, but you have to go to Russia to know how flat the earth can be. The steppe opened out beyond the river as smooth as the top of a table, with not a tree, not a bush, not a mound, not a fence, not a house, not a stream: nothing but the great yellow haystacks—and as enormous as the sea.

All this time I had been getting sick. I had noticed that Claudia Dmitrievna seemed to have a cold in her throat, and immediately after leaving Ulyanovsk, I began to develop a cold. When I got to Kiev, I had a fever and spent most of my time in bed. I only got out late one afternoon long enough to walk up through the park which looks down from the bluffs above the Dnieper. It is a wonderful park; and the people in Kiev gave me the impression of being happier than any others I had seen in Russia. The women were extremely good-looking and of a type I had never seen before; they had immensely big broad bodies, but small well-shaped hands and feet, and faces that were, surprisingly, not fat. Yet they also seemed quieter than anywhere else. The couples were all talking to one another in a manner much more lively than in the North; yet their voices were so low that I could hardly hear them, and as twilight fell, it all began to seem like some pleasant but faint phantasmagoria which merged with the vagueness of my fever.

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I had a very bad trip to Odessa. The Intourist service had been surpassing itself. I had always before thought it was funny when I had been assigned with two other people to a room with only two beds or charged for a room with a shower when the shower had been removed; and I had been laughing at the indignation of the lady from businesslike Prague, who was having her first experience of it. But I was sick and wanted to be comfortable. I had told the Intourist girl at Rostov that I was sick and that I wanted to change my "hard" accommodations for "soft." "Come to me tomorrow," she said languidly. I told her I thought it ought to be done right away, as otherwise it might not be possible. "Today or tomorrow," she said, "it is all the same thing,"—and added: "It is *so* hot! and there are *so* many people!" So she let it go till the next day, and the result was that, just as I was leaving, she appeared in the bus and told me that she had been unable to get the soft accommodations. She hadn't even arranged about the hard accommodation, and I had had to harass the conductor for hours to get him to give me a mattress and a blanket. He hadn't been told about me, he said and hadn't brought any bedclothes for me.

There was a man in the compartment I disliked. He was like some sort of Jewish traveling salesman. He spoke Russian very glibly and talked incessantly to the other two men, two big unshaved, bare-throated, round-headed louts. He rattled on at length about war and then got on to the theater and literature, in which I was surprised to see that the hard-boiled-looking Russians took an interest. But in Russia very few people are really hard-boiled as we understand toughness in America. I became depressed, however, as I listened, for they seemed to be saying all the expected things about all the regular productions. When the Jew had become aware of the limitations of their culture, he proceeded to give them an incorrect account of the philosophic background of Marxism.

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Of course, in spite of the heat, they shut the window tight when they went to bed. This hatred of fresh air had always been one of the things which irritated me most about the Russians. The three boys with whom I had shared the stateroom on the boat from London to Leningrad had insisted on closing the porthole every night even in the mildest May weather, so that I had always waked up in the morning in a state of partial asphyxiation; and in the apartment I had lived in in Moscow I had found that I had to take down the curtains in order to get the windows open and that, as soon as I would go out, the old woman who kept house for me would close both of the double windows and put the curtains up again. It obviously made people so unhappy to have the windows up in railroad compartments that I had finally given up suggesting it. And in my present feverish state it seemed to me very important that someone should tell the Russians that they could never master American technique until they learnt to breathe fresh air at night.

And a great sourness against Russia possessed me. I felt that I was extremely glad to be leaving.

I thought about the glasses they drink tea out of, which are always too hot to pick up in any ordinary convenient way. They have to put their thumb underneath and stretch one finger up to the rim; and it seemed to me characteristic of them that they should have been doing so much tea-drinking for so many years without ever contriving anything with a handle.

I thought about their food, which is so heavy that when I had first been invited out to dinner in Moscow, I used to mistake the *zakusky*, the *hors d'œuvres*, for a supper and, what with these and the vegetable soup that followed, find myself so stuffed before we arrived at the meat course that I would have to skip the main part of the dinner. I brooded on the fact that they had never been able to think up any better hard liquor than vodka, which is simply a form of raw alcohol.

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I brooded on their confounded language, of which I had just been getting such a dose in the chatter of the men in the compartment, with its eternal *kak-kak* and *tak-tak*, and its *da da, da da da!* It was encrusted with as many old barnacles and seaweed-strings and scallop-shells as a bottle which has been lying at the bottom of the sea. I thought about their fantastic alphabet, which was originally designed for Old Bulgarian and which has never really fitted Russian. The Communists, since the Revolution, have liquidated five useless letters, and they ought, I thought, to get rid of some more: at least a quarter of every Russian word was junk. I did not know which I disliked more: the prepositions that consist of a single consonant or the words that begin with combinations like *vsp.** . . .

I reflected that it would be an excellent thing for the government to prohibit the use of the phrases, "*Seichas*," "Right away," which is said by the Russians more often and lived up to less often than by the people of any other nation, and "*Nichevo*," which means "It doesn't matter" and which passes off many sins. They might also include "*Bolshoy skandal!*," "Big scandal!," which seems to have come to be used for everything from the arrest of the director of Intourist for compelling something like eight hundred and fifty of his women employees to sleep with him, to making little children eat their suppers. When a Russian says "*Bolshoy skandal!*" a gleam comes into his eye: nobody is ever really horrified. I wasn't sure, on second thought, that I would be on the side of the government if they tried to suppress this phrase.

I thought about their abominable waste-baskets which are always made of wire and have meshes so large that almost

*I should hate to have this taken seriously as my opinion of the Russian language, with its rich and poignant music, which makes it so fine a medium for the theater, and its variety of language elements—a variety only comparable to that of English at the other end of Europe. Also, the alphabet has certain advantages, as one can see by looking at Polish.

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everything you put into them falls right through onto the floor. You cannot clean up your business, you cannot get rid of old manuscripts and letters, because after you have thrown them into the basket and the basket has been removed, the papers still remain under the desk.

I reflected that it was no credit to the Russians that they had never made a good job of capitalism. If they had done so when the Western countries were working on it, they wouldn't be hampered now by trains like this one which made long journeys at twenty miles an hour, so that you were continually under the illusion that the thing was only just starting and always waiting for it to get under way.

I thought bitterly about their bed clothes, which are never tucked in at the bottom or sides but simply laid upon the bed and usually not quite large enough to cover it, so that your feet are always coming out. If the nights are so cold in winter, why haven't they learned to cover themselves up? And their pillow-slips, which are not bags like ours, but rather in the nature of loose envelopes and usually work off the pillows.

I thought about the way that, when they clear off the tables, they always sweep the crumbs on to the floor.

I told myself that there must be something wrong with Claudia Dmitrievna. It wasn't natural that a good-looking Russian girl should have no husband at twenty-one.

Nevertheless, as I would make my way along the car, through doors with people standing against them, through groups of men talking together, past women with babies and great bundles of baggage, I had to acknowledge that they were much the nicest people to be sick, while traveling, among. They were considerate, amiable, quiet. I had never fallen in with a Russian who was obnoxious, as the Germans often are.—Now and then someone would call my attention, in simple wonder or with the object of being helpful, to the fact that I had on my shirt a

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great gray spot the size of a saucer where my ink had come uncorked in my suitcase.

All night I had to keep gulping at intervals from a bottle of their insipid pop, and all night and at early morning I would get up and go out for air to the shut-off end of the car, where the only open window was, and look out at the white thatched cottages and the hay ricks and the fields of sunflowers, and breathe in the cool country air. But the Ukraine, enormous and fertile, became monotonous, too. And I was sickened by the eternal sunflowers which have a kind of personality in gardens but which, raised in great herds like that for their seeds, seemed somehow unnatural and gruesome: something like cattle, and yet less than cattle, and yet at the same time less than flowers. How horrible to think of them standing huddled there and turning round to face the sun in a mass! How disquieting to consider they were being cultivated for the oil in which would probably be fried the unappetizing and greasy omelet which I should be unable to eat for breakfast!

The dusty approaches to Odessa seemed to go on for hours.

In Odessa, I stayed in bed and got sicker and sicker, while I waited for the boat to Constantinople. I had them call a doctor.

The doctor was an extremely genial man in white trousers and a white Russian shirt, who discussed with me my travels in the Soviet Union and what a beautiful city Kiev was and put on a wonderful act in French, designed to make me feel how well I should be taken care of, with an old international *femme de chambre*. He asked me what my temperature was, and I said that I hadn't taken it. This didn't seem to lead to any action on his part, so I asked him whether he had a thermometer: with cheerful unconcern, he shook his head. He

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looked at my throat and told me that it would be a matter of two or three days; then suddenly jumped up, shook hands with me, and skipped out, exclaiming debonairly, as one man of the world to another: "*Je vous dis au revoir, monsieur!*"

He gave me several prescriptions for drugs, one of which was impossible to get filled. The international *femme de chambre* said she would do something about it, but she turned out to be off duty the next day.

I started in to read Gibbon, which somewhat cooled me off and aroused agreeable expectations, as I thought I was going to Constantinople.—I was alone for days with the monotonous sobbing of a couple of goofy Russian doves. I didn't then know Krylov's famous fable about the two pigeons who loved each other so that "they didn't notice how the time flew by" and who, "though they were sometimes sad, were never dull." But if I had, it would only have irritated me. They irritated me as it was.

I got worse and after two days, I called the doctor again. This time he told me that he had traveled in every country in the world except America: he had even been on an expedition to the North Pole. The hotel people had found me a thermometer, but I couldn't be sure what my temperature was because the Russian way of calculating is different from ours. When the doctor saw the thermometer, he said the degree indicated was pretty high, but seemed so unwilling to believe it was correct that I suggested the high figure registered might be due to my having forgotten to shake the thermometer down before I used it. The doctor agreed with alacrity, and I took my temperature again, but it came out the same as before. "That's high," commented the doctor, but without following the matter

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up—as if it were all an after-dinner conversation. Then I showed him a spot which had come out on my arm. He peered at it intently: we found other spots. His whole demeanor changed in an instant to one of acute anxiety and something like aversion. He muttered, "It's scarlet fever! it's scarlet fever!" "What should I do about it?" I asked. He gave a tremendous shrug, and threw out his hands at a total loss. "Go to the hospital, I suppose," he said, finally, as if it were something he had heard of being done in such cases. Then he suddenly darted out of the room without *au revoir* or explanation. I waited for the *femme de chambre*, who up to this moment had been looking after me with the most assiduous and charming solicitude; but she did not reappear and it was only after I had called the office that she rang me up on the phone and explained that she couldn't come to the room because she was just going off duty; and I never saw her or the doctor again.

Finally, the manager of the hotel appeared with a tense little woman in a red-visored cap, who identified my disease as scarlet fever and took me off in an ambulance to the hospital.

There I was received by a younger doctor of the modernized generation, not unlike a young American Southerner, and by a blond girl, one of the most beautiful I had yet seen. With expedition, I was registered by the blond girl, given a shower and a scrubbing by an old woman, neatly done up like a mummy in a blanket so that only my head was sticking out, and laid out on a stretcher on the floor. Rather impressed by the good job which they seemed to have made of this and reassured by the appearance of the doctor, I was hoping that the hospital might turn out to be one of their more up-to-date institutions. I lay there on the stretcher a long time regarding the blond girl's feet; she had thick ankles and wore no stockings, and she had unbuttoned the straps of her shoes. Then it turned out that it was all a mistake and that I would have to burst out of my cocoon to

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count my money and sign receipts for my things. There were two Jewish helpers hanging around who looked like old Weber-and-Fields Jewish comedians; they had whiskers that went around their chins, reaching from ear to ear. While we were counting the money, one of them peered through the door just behind the blond girl's shoulder and, grinning, stretched forth a clawlike hand. With one vigorous push, she shut the door on him.

I wound myself up in the shroud again, and the two Jewish comics carried me out. After taking me a little way, they set me down in a courtyard, under the still, blue, clear and starry Euxine night, and, while they were resting, discussed whether or not I had been given a receipt for my money.

Then they carried me into a stale-smelling building with high ceilings and dirty blue-gray walls. Everybody was terribly nice and anxious to meet the emergency with energy. A bed was put up for me in the doctor's room. When I was in bed, I called the nurse's attention to a bed-bug crawling on the table-cloth of the little table beside the bed. She at once changed the table-cloth, but did nothing about the bug. I asked whether I could have a window open. "Certainly," said the young doctor and told the nurse to open one. "Don't you want them both open?" he asked. It was hot: I said yes. But the nurse seemed to demur. "Open the other one, too," said the doctor. Here was a man who really had the new "culture"!

As soon as the lights had been turned out, I became aware of the myriad teeming bed-life. They were swarming out of the pillows and the mattress. I got up and went out into the hall, and there I found two old women. They were two opposite types, but both very Russian; one was always cheerful and the other was always sad, but both had that deep resignation, that incapacity for being surprised. They brought in another bed and treated the infested one then and there with a roaring kero-

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sene torch. I suggested that bed-bugs sometimes lurked in the mattress, but they scouted this idea. In arranging the new bed, the sad one knocked over the big wine bottle full of gargle, which inundated the floor and had to be mopped up; and, in mopping, the cheerful one knocked over the medicine glass and broke it.

Then, when everything seemed to be set for the night, I was confronted by two more *klopy*—which was what the old women said they were called—reconnoitering on the tablecloth of the night table and evidently getting ready to drop on me. I pointed them out to the sad old woman, who immediately caught and killed them, making half-stifled grief-stricken sounds, as of one who had seen many little children die and who knew that there was nothing to be done. Then she strapped onto her foot a polisher like the one the orderly uses in “Chapaev,” and began rubbing it back and forth on the floor. It was a sort of dolorous dance, evidently hard on her back. She would stop and rest and then go on, and then, after a time, stop and rest again. I felt sorry for her, because she had been so sweet about everything and I had noticed that the nurses tended to pick on her; but I should have felt more sorry for her if she had not seemed so terribly resigned. Her eyes looked as if she were always crying, or rather as if she had cried so much that they had gone dry a long time ago.

I fell asleep and went into my fever-dreams. I thought that a play which I had written and which I had called “A Bit of the New” was being produced by some American theater group. But the producers had kept it so long that it had finally been found necessary to change the title to “Quite a Lot of the Old.” Seeing a poster in the lobby of the theater, I was suddenly seized with disgust. I resolved to go on in the Second Act—which took place on an old-fashioned American porch—made up as an unknown stranger with a derby hat, side-whiskers and a watch-

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chain, and deliver a long speech bearing vitally on the plot of the play, but unconnected with what was to follow. I hoped that this would break up the performance.—I woke up—it was morning now. Repressing hysterical laughter, I thought: "I mustn't let Russia get me! That was a Russian dream!"

A figure appeared before me in a straw cap, spectacles, a black coat, a white vest and a pair of striped trousers and carrying an umbrella hooked over one arm. He was a very old man, as I later found out; but, in spite of the gray bristles of his shaved scalp, he did not give the impression of being old. He had broad shoulders and dark heavy arched eyebrows. As soon as his attention was directed to me, he became energized into extraordinary activity. First he made somebody give him a spoon and, after nervously scratching his bristles with the handle, thrust it down my throat and peered in; then, nervously and heavily coughing down my chest, he applied a stethoscope to my heart.

Then, in a deep and loud theatrical voice, he bade the attendants clear the furniture out of the office, addressing them as "*tovarishchy*," but with the compulsive overpowering tones of one who has always given orders. They stood, of course, without doing anything, as Russians are likely to do when confronted with a demand for drastic action: there was quite a little equipment and furniture in the office. He commanded them again to start at once. They reluctantly removed a few pieces. Then the doctor drove everybody out and, closing the great, old, high double doors and standing with his back to them a moment, and then marching over toward me with tremendous impressiveness in the manner of an operatic bass about to impart a secret or about to vow a revenge, he announced to me in thundering accents that he was putting his office at my disposal in order that I might have a room to myself. He then went on to declare that he would have me well in no time, emphasizing

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the climax of his solo by clapping his palms together and holding up his right hand with all five fingers extended. Then unexpectedly, cocking his head, he lapsed into a whimsical smile at the same time almost childishly appealing; and ended by improvising a little aria, based upon the phrase "All right!", the only words of English he knew, and its Russian equivalent, "Khorosho."

Then he summoned the attendants back and bade them go on with the dismantling. They accomplished this by stages, and it took hours.

When the old gentleman made his rounds the next morning, he brought me a small volume of Tennyson. It had belonged, he said, to his daughter, who knew English and was living in Paris.

I stayed in the hospital six weeks. I recovered very quickly from my original attack, but had to stay on account of the quarantine: then, just as I seemed to be cured and they were going to let me out, I had a relapse and had to stay another week.

The life was pretty monotonous: it was a little like living in a monastery. After a few days, they moved me out of the doctor's room into a room with other patients; and my world was contracted to that room, the corridor and the operating room, which they let me use at night for a study. I would read Marx and Engels during the daytime and Gibbon in the evening. An old Jewish doctor who knew some English brought me a volume of Sir Alfred Lyall's poems and a small book of selections from "Little Women," edited for German readers. The only thing to be seen out the window was the Bacteriological Institute across the street, and one of the events of my stay was when they repainted it.

Yet it was interesting to watch day by day from inside the

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working of a Soviet institution, and I got in some ways a much clearer idea of the processes and relations of Russian life than I had been able to do in Moscow.

The hospital itself was old and dirty. It had been built about 1795—one of the oldest public buildings in Odessa—and it seemed to have remained practically untouched. Those high-ceilinged high-windowed rooms had been receiving contagious diseases ever since years before the exile of Pushkin, when he had come to live in Odessa, almost ever since the days when the town had been only a Turkish fort. Odessa, which has very few factories and little value now as a port, has been neglected in the Soviet programs. There is, I understand, one fine new hospital, but efforts on the part of the Odessans to get a new contagious hospital have so far been unsuccessful; and what I saw was a bit of old Russia with very few of the cobwebs knocked off. I was subjected, for example, to treatments which I had supposed were entirely obsolete: at one time they “cupped” me daily with a set of twenty heavy brass cups which must have been a part of the original equipment, and they dosed me continually with valerian, a bitter old-fashioned drug, of which the effects, according to the modern pharmacopœia, are “largely psychic.”

There was evidently a scarlatina epidemic: the cases were coming in by the dozen, women, children and men. At one time there were three hundred cases, out of a city of half a million. One woman died while I was there. They would allow them to accumulate in the corridor, in their lazy Russian fashion, putting off as long as possible the necessity of opening another room, which would involve the displacement of furniture. Everybody, as far as I could see, got exactly the same care and the same food, and everybody was treated with great kindness. The *besprizornnye*, the little homeless tramps, and the children of Communist officials were put to bed just as they came in, and all

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the rooms were crowded—though the little waifs, to be sure, had nobody to bring them toys, fruit and books as the children of well-to-do parents did.

It was a public service, of course, and nobody paid a kopek. I wasn't even allowed to pay for telegrams or cables: they told me that there was money set aside for such things. The food, though greasy like all Russian food and tiresome like all hospital diet—I got terribly fed up with potatoes—was excellent, and there was plenty of it: the vegetables and fruit of the Ukraine. Only the milk did not seem to me what it should be, and they did not have any real coffee.

The hospital, as I have said, was terribly dirty. I never realized how extremely low the Russian standard of cleanliness had been till I saw the conditions which were tolerated in one of the places where sanitation was most necessary but where the new broom had not yet swept clean. The wash-basin with running water in our room, for example, was used for face-washing, dish-washing, gargling and emptying urine; and I once saw one of the older doctors spit in it without bothering to turn on the faucet. The toilet had no seat and no way of fastening the door and, though the hospital people tried to keep it in order, the patients, as is usual in Russia, generally left it in a mess. The glass panes in the door had not been cleaned up since at least 1915, as that was the earliest date which had been scratched in the paint or whatever it was with which they were partly coated. When you took a bath, you were likely to find yourself contemplating a basket of garbage. I never understood why they kept this garbage in the bathroom, unless they burned it in the stove that heated the water. The flies were frightful, and nothing was done in the way of screening the windows, except for a single piece of netting nailed over one of the windows in the doctor's room, which didn't, of course, prevent the flies from entering through the other window. Nor was anything done

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to prevent them from breeding in the long grass, which grew rank with weeds outside.

And periodically there was a bed-bug crisis. The only thing they knew to do about them was to apply the kerosene torch to the iron bedsteads, and I never could convince them that bed-bugs also lived in cracks in the wood. Finally, however, a fastidious woman doctor who always smelled of lavender water discovered *klopy* on the old horsehair chair which I used to sit in reading every day, and insisted that action be taken. The sensible thing to have done would have been immediately to have burned the chair, but they do not like to take such summary measures in Russia. At first they would go only so far as to peel off the strips of ribbon which were tacked along the back and arms, and then when a few days later, the doctor was still able to show them bed-bugs walking in and out of the cracks, they took to spraying it with something or other.

The nurses were almost entirely untrained. They were generally middle-aged women with children and no husbands, who had been forced to earn their living. They would make wrong entries on the temperature charts (I was once given a sudden rise for the next day) and lose the papers out of the dossiers for the cases. One smoked continual cigarettes and made the patients cough. One whose husband had left her, frankly disliked the whole thing and paid as little attention to it as possible. One got sick at the operations. The ward, to be sure, was badly understaffed: ten nurses to a hundred patients; and they had to do all the things which in our hospitals are done by orderlies. (Many mothers and grandmothers were there, sleeping in the ward and taking care of their own children.) They had no control over the little boys, who kept climbing in and out of bed, who went to sleep anytime they pleased, and who engaged in hilarious roughhousing when they had temperatures. Their way of handling the hospital nightgowns was typical of

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nurses and patients alike: I used to wonder at first why so many of the nightgowns had the strings about the neck left tied but one of them always torn away. Then I observed that when they took them off, they would never go to the trouble of untying the knot, but always simply rip them open. What the nurses did best was amuse the children, reading to them, telling them stories and acting out little plays. They had for themselves, the nurses, two principal sources of diversion: a shabby geranium plant, which they would water from time to time, but which never flowered; and an old volume of Lermontov, containing "A Hero of Our Time," which they would read in moments of leisure, each one, apparently, taking it up where the last one had left it off.

The Head Nurse was quite a different matter. She was a much more energetic and positive person, and she was also much bulkier and taller. She looked a little like the Ugly Duchess, but her expression of haughtiness or indignation would melt into tenderness or humor at the slightest solicitation. She had that peculiarly Russian ready humanity, which, where there is a will to give it power, becomes heroic; and she worked exceedingly hard, wrestling with the hospital arrangements, seeing to it that the nurses gave the treatments on time and did not lose the records, banging the hands of the neophytes when they tried to fool with the surgical instruments, and when she had nothing else to do, reading to the children herself. One day she showed me her Communist card and told me that she had formerly done more active work, but that her heart was bad and that they had put her here where the work was not so exhausting.

And as I gradually came to learn in the hospital who were and who were not Communists, I got a much clearer notion than I had had before of the relations between the Communists

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and their followers, and the other members of the Russian community. The Communists, it was plain to me in the hospital, were the people who took all the responsibility. And though I had sometimes resented in Moscow the constraining and intimidating effect which their presence had on other Russians, I was grateful to them when I got into the hospital, because they seemed to be the only people who were sensible, efficient and up-to-date. If you really wanted to get anything done, you had to go to a Communist about it. And I came to sympathize with their trials in making the other Russians get things done.

One day, for example, not long after I had come, I gave some letters to one of the nurses and asked her to mail them for me. She told me that I would have to ask the doctor, which puzzled me, as I had had letters mailed before. When the old man, the one who had received me so dramatically and who was supposed to be in charge of the ward, came in on his rounds the next morning, I told him that I wanted to mail some letters. In his resounding basso profundo, first in Russian and then in German, he tried to impress upon me, with terrible emphasis on all the grave consequences, that it was forbidden for scarlet fever patients to send letters because the letters would transmit the germs and the recipients would get the disease. I became indignant at this, as I knew they had had my English telegrams translated in order to find out what was in them, and dreaded their devious methods of censorship. I demanded to see the director. He was a young man, a Communist, I suppose, at any rate the new type of Russian whom, despairing more or less of the older generations, they are training as fast as they can to take command of Soviet institutions. He and the older doctor discussed the situation in my presence. The director was for letting me send the letters. "But," the old man insisted, drooping but throwing out his hands, "the people who get the letters will get scarlatina! *Bolshoy skandal!*" "Ilya

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Petrovich," replied the director, "that's nothing but *pedantism*. People aren't likely to get diseases from letters." And he took my letters, explaining, to save Ilya Petrovich's face, that he would disinfect them before he mailed them. Afterwards, the Head Nurse came in. "All that fuss about a few letters!" she said. "Don't you remember that you gave me some and that I mailed them the other day? You can't give people scarlet fever through your hands."

On another day the Workers' Inspection came round. They were an old man and an elderly woman who behaved very much like simple workers in any other country. The old man held his hat in his hand and was very respectful toward the nurses. The woman looked around her, eyes shining, deeply gratified that this was their hospital, that she herself had been appointed to approve it. They asked me how things were, and I told them that everything was fine. When they were gone, the Head Nurse, who had been present at the interview, said to me, "Why did you tell them that everything was all right? You know that plenty of things are wrong." But it was plain that the Workers' Inspection would never have known for themselves whether things were wrong or right.

The children were extremely attractive and extremely badly behaved. They ran wild when the doctors were away. With their shaved heads, they looked like little picked chickens.

There were three little boys in my room, two of them the sons of officials. The father of one was a Communist, and a certain amount of fuss had been made over him when he had first been brought into the hospital. "We have a little Narcomfin with us!" they would tell me, and the little boy would say, "No!", having been taught, I suppose, that it was very ill bred to accept distinction for his father's office. He was twelve—

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the frailest, most sensitive, most volatile type of Russian, very spoiled by his mother, I thought. He chattered incessantly like a bird in the curious Russian way that is almost like operatic singing, and would go on chirping, appealing and wheedling even after the person to whom he had been talking had left the room some minutes before. It seemed to me that he was going to grow up to be like that Leningrad aesthete who had been reading the sailors Donne.

And, sure enough, when his mother arrived, she turned out to be a Leningrader. She, too, was frail and small-featured; but she had not, as I supposed at first, been molded by the old society: she did not speak any foreign language, and all her opinions were the orthodox Communist ones. She had, for example, named the little boy Elmar, a name which had recently been concocted out of e for Engels, l for Lenin, and m-a-r for Marx. Her tastes and habits seemed exactly those of a serious middle-class woman in the other kind of society; and I was relieved when she began to tell me how terrible the hospital was, as I hadn't up to that time been sure whether anybody else had noticed.

She was having a dreadfully distressing time, because the little boy had developed double mastoid and had to be operated on in both ears. She broke down when they took him into the operating room and wept in the hall so terribly that the big bustling woman who managed the mess had to come out of the kitchen and tell her quietly that she mustn't do that and lead her off to her room.

The second little boy was ten, and his nickname was Vova for Vladimir. His mother had a rosy round face and wore a handkerchief around her head: she looked like a country woman. His father was quite different, the new type: he was clean-shaved, and had well-cut features and sharp clear gun-barrel-colored eyes, and wore a dark-blue business suit. Vova

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was very bright and a demon of energy. He had clear hard eyes like his father's, but light green, with the oriental slant. His vitality was indefatigable: from early morning till ten or eleven at night, he was making aeroplanes out of paper and sailing them around the room; acting out one-man playlets of war in which he was always getting shot or shooting; singing songs, of which he had an enormous repertoire, ranging from "*Partizany*" and "The International" through Gypsy songs to selections from Italian opera, of which he knew the Italian words; and starting unfinished speeches which would begin with a ringing "Tovarishchy!"—he never could get any further and in order to avoid an anticlimax, would have to flop with a bang on the bed. He read everything he could find in the hospital—when he did so, concentrating absorbedly; and he drew remarkably well—soldiers, cannon, aeroplanes, gunboats and tanks—with little imagination, but considerable technical accuracy. The only thing that could divert him from reading or drawing was the consciousness—he would be aware of it immediately—that somebody had given a new toy to the little boy across the room. Vova's attention would be seen to wander from the drawing-pad or the book, but he would lie silent till the visitor had gone. Then he would go over and get the toy and, oblivious of the whinings of Misha, who was weak and only five years old, work it until it broke; then he would take it all to pieces; then he would throw the pieces at Misha. When little Elmar was taken off to be operated on, Vova frightened poor Misha into spasms by enacting the operation; and then went on to operations on flies.

I liked him, but he got to be such a nuisance that I presently began to try to suppress him. But whenever I would grab him and put him back in bed, he would welcome it as an invitation to roughhouse and immediately leap out again and make himself more obnoxious than ever. Then I discovered that I could keep

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him quiet by playing with him a children's war game, which was something like checkers and chess but in which the pieces represented soldiers and had various military ranks. At first, I was winning so often that I began to think it was a pity. When he saw that the next move was going to expose him, he would become absorbed in contemplation out the window, and I would have difficulty getting him to play. But then he put his mind on the problem and worked out a strategy so astute that I was never afterwards able to beat him.

He would fearlessly bedevil the older boys, and then when they turned on him and chastised him, he would rush in and throw himself on his bed, not in fits of childish weeping, but with hoarse roars of rage and defeat. Only rarely did he break down and shed tears.

He was so pretty and had so much charm that it was very difficult for the nurses to be cross with him, but as his health got better, his behavior got worse, and he made the other little boy so miserable, messed up so many treatments, created so much wreckage and got into so many places where he was not supposed to be, that he was by way of becoming a *bolshoy skandal*, and there would be nurses or doctors or Elmar's mother coming in every half hour to lecture him or to bring him back from some mischief.

The day his mother was coming to take him away, he got hold of a rubber ball and played handball against the walls and got into a perfect frenzy of badness. Then the word came in that his mother was waiting for him, and they wrapped him up in a blanket and took him out, while his face was suffused with a look of bliss. A little later, I heard a voice outside and went to the window and there he was, calling good-by to us from the street. He was walking beside his ample mother, patient and pink-faced and innocent, with her handkerchief around her

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head; and looked so tiny in his knee-breeches and cap, after the havoc he had raised in the hospital.

During my first days in the hospital, I was mystified to find wet condoms trailing around the room and, not without some hesitation, finally inquired about them. I learned that they filled them with water and tied them behind the children's bad ears. As they never thought of throwing them away but always simply dropped or draped them wherever they happened to have been taken off, Vova very soon got hold of them and discovered he could blow them up and explode them. Then he went on to make them into balloons by blowing them up and tying them with thread. The nurse who smoked cigarettes and who was so extraordinarily good at little plays, conceived the further idea of painting them with faces in mercurochrome. Everybody was very much pleased.

It was curious to note that even Vova, the most high-spirited of the children, had in his voice those plaintive cadences which are a part of the language itself.

The children were always acting, and whenever I was stuck over the meaning of a Russian word in a book, I had only to ask a child or a nurse and they would instantly act it out for me with astonishing resourcefulness and vividness. I have spoken of the old doctor's declamations; I used to think when I first heard him talk that he was quoting from some play written in couplets. And the fastidious woman doctor who discovered the bed-bugs in the chair, would make scenes with the nurses in the mornings when she came in and found the room in a mess,

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which were exactly like some old-fashioned comedy. There was one magnificent soliloquy which went on after the incorrigible nurse had scurried out of the room, and ended with rolled-up eyes and supplicating sweeping gestures and an ironic, "*Krasivoy! Krasivoy!*" ("Beautiful! Beautiful!"). She might have been doing it for me, though her tirade was not directed toward me, and I imagine she would have delivered it anyway, whether there had been anyone in the room or not. As far as I could see, it had no effect.

The street-life was quite different from Moscow: much more spontaneous and lively. It was a relief to hear the people outside the window singing, whistling and laughing, and at night having drunken disputes.

The Odessans were good-looking people, mostly with round black eyes. Even ill and in their old hospital nightgowns and among the dirty hospital walls, they were unmistakably attractive. There was one young mother with a fascinating baby whom I used to hunt up every day. The baby was a girl with big dark eyes who, when admired, would turn away and hide her face in her mother's shoulder. She seemed to have come into the world with a fully developed feminine beauty and a feminine self-consciousness about it.—There was an old grandmother who had come into the hospital to take care of her little grandson. She had been run down by a droshky, and her face was horribly flattened and disfigured: her ears had been cauliflowered, her cheeks had been ripped in such a way that, in healing, the wounds had pulled her mouth awry, and her nose had been squashed upwards so that there was little left but two large holes.

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The Intourist interpreter who came to see me was a thin washed-out girl with eyeglasses. I got to like her. She told me that she was a real Odessinka; that Odessinky were supposed to be frivolous, but that all were not so, certainly. When I asked her why the Russians were so wonderful in the theater, she said, "Because they feel things more deeply."

She did her best to get me what I needed and to arrange about my transportation; but she vanished for several weeks and when she turned up again, explained that she had herself been ill and had been unable to persuade anybody at Intourist to run the risk of coming to see me—though they would have had only to talk to me through the window as the families of the patients did.

She was loyal, deep-feeling, unpunctual and vague. Quite different was the handsome brunette Komsomolka who paid us a visit every afternoon. At first, I classed her on the credit side with the Communists, then I realized that, in spite of her spruce appearance, which contrasted with that of the other nurses, she was really not making herself very useful and was in fact tending to get in the way of such things as were being done. She would come in and talk world events to the nurses at moments when they were not prepared to be interested in them; and all her politics came straight out of "*Pravda*." She would snatch Vova out of his crib, kissing him violently and exclaiming, "Oh, I love children so!" when the nurses had just been hoping that they had gotten him quieted down. But she had a kind of edge on everyone else by virtue of her Komsomol standing.

There was another Young Communist who used to come to see me, a very dark Mediterranean-looking girl. She was a bacteriological research-worker, absorbed by her experiments with the rabbits and mice in which she was studying typhus. She had learned to speak French very well without ever having

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been in France and used to come around and talk to me and do things for me when the Intourist interpreter disappeared. She was quite unlike these Intourist women: she always did what she said she would do at the time when she had said she would do it. And she had none of the tiresome side of the Komsomol. She was not cocky and not complacent, but sensible, straightforward and mature, full of vitality and free from attitudes. I liked her extremely. She was not merely seriously interested, but actually deeply happy in the consciousness that she was doing something to get rid of the dirt and disease of old Russia. She did not talk about this, but it was plain in all she said and did.

One day one of the older nurses asked me slyly: "Should you say I was a Russian or a Jew?" It had always seemed obvious to me that she was Jewish. A little while afterwards, in conversation with a Komsomolka, I asked her whether she were a Ukrainian. "No: I'm Jewish," she replied. I saw then that her features were as Hebraic as those of any of the other Jews in Odessa, yet, though I had seen her a number of times before, I had never thought about her being a Jew. It was her own lack of self-consciousness about being Jewish which had made the difference. It would never have occurred to her to put to me the question of the older woman. She had grown up in a world in which Jews were neither persecuted nor discriminated against. For the younger generation in Odessa, there was nothing in particular about being Jewish any more than being Rumanian or Greek. This was one of the incidents of my trip which most impressed me.

I was anxious to get back to the States and tried to induce Ilya Petrovich to cut down my quarantine a little. The Russians

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cannot understand impatience: they are so used to standing in line for things, waiting for meetings to begin, traveling on slow trains through great spaces. The nurses and hospital workers were always sticking their heads in and saying, cheerfully, "*Skuchno pravda!*" ("It's dull for you, isn't it!") or "*Skoro domoi!*" ("Home soon!"). This latter used to irritate me, because it was so far from being true. They seemed to have no sense of time; and I reflected that the Five-Year Plan had probably been contrived in the effort to give them one.

I would lie there and wait for the days to elapse and listen to the Russian diminutives, which, also, I began to find exasperating. They seemed to give diminutives to everything. My books were always *knizhky*, instead of *knigy*; the nurse was always *sestrichka*, instead of *sestra*; even an apple was a *yablochka*, instead of a *yabloko*. I kept wanting to say, "Don't be silly!" Apparently, as soon as they depart from the plane of the strictest formality, they go all to pieces with diminutives. The opposite pole to this, produced, I suppose, by reaction against the ordinary Russian laxness, is the dehumanized and schoolmasterish political style which is one of the more dubious gifts of the Soviets to the development of international socialism.

One night I was sitting in the operating room, with my book on the white zinc table under the naked all-clarifying bulb, reading that noble book, Franz Mehring's "Life of Marx." There was a preface which told of Mehring's difficulties in getting it published during the War and of his death as a result of his shock over the murder of his closest allies, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg: how he had walked his room for hours, unwilling to believe that such a thing could happen. But if he had lived? I thought about Hitler. The papers were full of the preliminaries of the Italo-Abyssinian War. I thought about

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Gibbon: the long collapse of Rome, imperceptible to those involved in it; the centuries of rule by clowns and brutes, each sweeping the one before into the dust-bin almost as soon as he had stuck up his head. A doctor came in, a very decent fellow, one of the old race of good Russian giants. He picked up the book and looked at the title-page to see whether it had been printed in Germany since Hitler; and we had a few moments' conversation in pidgin Russian and German.—That evening I felt very sharply that the existence of the Soviet Union, with all its old slowness and debris, such as I was pretty well submerged in in that hospital, was the only guarantee in Europe against another receding tide of civilization. Like the old lady from Springfield, Illinois, I felt that it was safer here.

There was, aside from the Head Nurse, only one nurse who knew anything about a hospital. Like Vova, she was the green-eyed kind of Russian to whom, according to the theory I had evolved, the pale-eyed kind has to yield. One day she came and sat beside my bed and began talking to me apropos of nothing, but as if in reply to unspoken criticisms which she felt I might be making of the hospital. "You know that under Nicolai Alexandrovich Romanov," she said, "the people were kept in ignorance. We had no science and no technique. Now, since the Revolution, we have science and technique for the first time." She told me that, during the War, she had served in a field hospital in Rumania, and that her husband had been a Communist. He was dead now and had left her with a delicate, very blond, little girl, who used to come to the hospital and pass things to her mother through the window. I told her that the little girl was pretty: "Yes," she said, "I'm fond of my little daughter." She talked about Odessa during the War, when they would hear the machine-guns in the streets and be afraid to go out of

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doors. The city had been badly wrecked. "But that's all forgotten now," she said.

Another nurse, the older Jewish woman, had been married to a chemical laboratory worker and had five grown daughters. They had been fairly well-to-do: she showed me pictures of their bourgeois interior in the days before the Revolution and of their summer vacations in the Crimea. She was old and had never worked for a living and the hospital routine was hard for her: she had to be continually on her feet, and they had nothing but canvas shoes and heelless slippers. But she gave the job everything she had—not like a trained nurse, but like a woman who has brought up a large family. She would perform for the children in the hospital the little paper-folding tricks with which she had used to amuse her daughters. She was particularly kind to me and gave me special attention on the nights when my fever was bad, at a time when she was half sick herself and had a hundred patients to take care of.

When I began going down for the second time, I had to give up Marx and Gibbon and tried to divert myself with the children's books. Some of them were intended for political instruction. These were drawn from international sources, and it was strange to see Mike Gold and Harry Potamkin turning up in that Byzantine alphabet. But most of them were simply amusing: Pushkin's fairy-tales in verse with pictures and S. Marshak's wonderful rhymes. I succeeded in translating one of the latter just before they turned me over on my stomach and began applying the big brass cups which ought to have been in the historical museum in Moscow along with the drinking-bowls of the Scythians, while Vova and the other little boy climbed up on the foots of their cribs and were highly entertained by the spectacle:

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STRIPES AND WHISKERS

Once upon a time there was a little girl—
You would like to know her name to know it's true?

It is known, I'm sure you'd find,

To whoever makes her mind,

But it must remain a mystery to you.

You would like to know her age? I will reveal it.

I am powerless to make it any more.

Neither forty had she seen

Nor even twenty nor fourteen—

In fact, I must confess she was but four.

She had one thing she liked better than the rest.

It was whiskery and gray and beautifully striped.

You ask me what it was? You haven't guessed?

Neither veg'table nor mineral nor biped

But a kitten.

The little girl took the kitten and she put him in bed to sleep.

There's your little back, she said,

Lying on a nice soft bed.

There, to keep you warm, she said,

Are nice clean sheets and nice clean spread.

Nice white pillows for your head

Make you comfortable in bed.

So the little girl arranged the kitten, and then she went down
to get her supper.

But when she came back again, what do you think she found?

His tail upon the pillow lay,

His head reposed the other way.

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So she turned the kitten around and made him lie the way he ought to.

That's not the way to sleep! she said.
Your back should be upon the bed;
Across the bed, the sheets and spread;
The pillows underneath your head.

So she went down to finish her supper, and when she came back, what do you think she found?

Nor sheets nor spread
Nor furry head.

Whiskers and stripes was under the bed.

Is that the way to sleep? she said. What a silly, silly kitten!

And then the little girl decided that she ought to wash the kitten.

So she went and got a washrag
And a cake of scented soap
And hot water from the kettle
In a pretty china cup.
But when she put him in the water
And got ready for a rub,
The kitten didn't want to wash
And bolted from the tub.

Whoever saw such a silly, silly kitten!

So the little girl decided to teach the kitten to talk.

She said to the kitten: Old wo-man.
And the kitten said: Miaow.

She said: Horse.
And the kitten said: Miaow.

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She said: Teach-er.

And the kitten said: Miaow.

She said: E-lec-tric-i-ty.

And the kitten said: Miaow, miaow.

Always miaow, only miaow. What a silly, silly kitten!

So the little girl decided to feed the kitten.

In a cup she brought him cereal

Of the very best material.

But the kitten wouldn't eat.

In a bowl she brought him greens:

Lettuce and lima-beans.

But the kitten wouldn't eat.

So then she brought him milk in a little saucer, and lo!

The kitten had lapped it up before you could utter, Bo!

Such a silly, silly kitten!

The little girl went out for a walk and when she came back home, the kitten was nowhere to be seen. She looked under the table, and he wasn't there. She looked under the bed, and he wasn't there. She looked under the bureau and she looked under the stove, but the kitten was nowhere to be found.

Where in the world was the kitten?

Now there was neither rat nor mouse, but there were pencils in the house.

On Poppa's desk they quiet lay until the kitten walked that way.

A pencil rolled, the kitten pounced; the pencil slipped aside and bounced.

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The pencil fell; away it sped
Beneath the wardrobe and the bed—
From bed to table—what a pace!
The kitten giving eager chase—
Along the wall, across the floor,
Till finally it reached the door.

Now just that instant, full of worry,
A man came in to talk to Poppa,
A man with glasses and a hat.
The pencil tripped him in his hurry
And so he came a fearful cropper
And on the floor astonished sat.

The silly, silly kitten!

So the little girl wrapped the kitten up and took him for an outing in the Summer Park.

People would ask: Who's that you've got there?

And the little girl would answer: This is my little daughter.

People would ask: Why has your daughter got such gray cheeks?

And the little girl would answer: She hasn't washed them for a long time.

People would ask: Why has she got fuzzy paws and whiskers like a man?

And the little girl would answer: She hasn't shaved for a long time.

And then suddenly the kitten jumped out and ran away, and everybody could see it was a kitten.

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Such a silly kitten!

And after that,

After that,

The kitten grew up a sensible cat.

And the little girl grew up and went to high school.

The Russians have never had rhymes like this before. Marshak got the idea from the English, some of whose nursery rhymes he has imitated, but he has produced something distinctively Russian. His tales have the terseness and realism which has always been characteristic of Russian poetry. Observe that there is nothing whimsical in this story, as there is in A. A. Milne, for example. The kitten behaves like a kitten, and the little girl behaves like a little girl with a kitten. I saw a nonsense book, too, called "Confusion" (by K. Chukovsky), in which the kittens decided to grunt like pigs and the frogs to fly like birds and the foxes got hold of matches and set fire to the sea, and which seemed to owe something to Edward Lear. But in the end, everything went back to normal, which is not the case in the "Nonsense Books."

These children's books are cheap, admirably printed and beautifully illustrated.

I became interested in Ilya Petrovich and, after my struggle with him over my letters, got to feel for him affection and sympathy. I was sorry I had been so cross. He had quite enough trials, I saw, already.

Ilya Petrovich was a gentleman, and—what I had never seen before in Russia—he regularly dressed like one. He had a peculiar combination which I had noted before as characteristic of the old upper classes, of great stature and very broad shoulders with very small feet and hands. His voice was, as I have

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said, a resonant bass and his manner was dictatorial; but his most terrible lectures were likely to end in a winning and rather shy smile. His face was as sensitive as a child's: it always gave him away. When he was being yelled at by an angry woman whom he had moved with her baby to a less desirable bed and threatening to call the militia, his expression would betray the deepest anguish; and when there was a death or a serious illness, he would hover around in the hallway, as obviously worried and nervous as the family of the patient themselves. On one occasion when my heart seemed to be lagging, he had me dosed with digitalis and would keep popping in every few minutes to listen with his stethoscope until it seemed to him normal again. (His own heart was in poor shape, I was told, and sometimes he would have to stay away from the hospital.) He was never quite so imposing as his figure warranted, because his head was always sunk forward. I used to think that before the Revolution he must have had a fashionable practice and that he must find it now rather sad to be working in the dirty scarlatina ward under a director younger than himself.

With children, he had the genial and threatening jokes of old-fashioned doctors everywhere. He would appear in the doorway of the big room into which the hordes of *besprizornye* had been loaded and boom out in his deep voice, which he loved to exercise: "*Kak Vashe zdorov'e?*"; and the little boys would reply in chorus: "*Kak maslo korov'e!*" ("How is your health?" "Fine as cow's butter!"—it makes a jingle in Russian.) There were three questions and three responses. He did this every morning; and one day I heard him do it twice. He must have been particularly troubled about something and, forgetting he had already gone through the ritual once, thrown himself into it again in order to relieve his tension.

Ilya Petrovich and the Communist Head Nurse used to have terrific altercations. There was one which seemed to go on

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all morning and to surge back and forth like a battle. Suddenly the door of our room flew open and Ilya Petrovich burst in with the Ugly Duchess in full pursuit. He dropped down in our buggy armchair and went on protesting about something while the big woman stood over him, insisting. Neither paid the slightest attention to the people already in the room. But very soon Ilya Petrovich sprang up again and rushed out, and the Head Nurse rushed out after him. I laughed about it to the green-eyed nurse. "What's the matter?" I asked. She took my dictionary and showed me a word which was defined as meaning "hurly-burly." "But what's it all about?" I asked. "Old!" she answered, smiling serenely. "He's seventy-five and she's fifty-five."

Not long after my conversation with this nurse in which she had talked about Russia under the Tsar, I was gazing at Ilya Petrovich as he stood in the doorway with his back to me. He was evidently brooding about his cases, wondering what he ought to do next or trying to remember something. His enormous shoulders were rounded, his head drooped forward on his chest, so that from behind one saw only his shoulders and the gray bristling stubble of his crown. I had always thought of his slumped-over carriage as being due to his age and his social demotion; but now I reflected that he was one of the men who *had* had science at the time when, as the nurse had told me, the Tsar had kept science from the people. He had had science in a feudal country where the implications of science for society were dangerous to pursue and impossible to apply; he seemed a crippled man. They had all been crippled men, even the greatest of them, the old intellectuals and technicians who had lived and worked in Russia. They had always had to keep their heads down, and their position was always ambiguous. Now, under the new regime, they were still compelled to keep down their heads, and they were still not always sure which side they

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were on. A big man with small hands, a sensitive face and an habitually bent spine, Ilya Petrovich was typical, I suppose, of a class who had lost all and suffered much. Yet today he was devoting to these thin little children, the race of the new Russia, as much gentleness and care and solicitude as he could ever have done for the patients for whom he had, so many years ago, first assumed his white vest and striped trousers. He had a daughter in Paris, but he was still here.

I still had some traces of my complications at the end of the six-weeks quarantine, and he didn't want to let me go. I'd be there now, I dare say, if I had followed his recommendations. But I put up a determined resistance and after two or three days he yielded. He took it, however, a little in bad part and, full of fear lest I might make a scandal by getting seriously sick abroad, he insisted that I sign a document affirming that I was being discharged against the advice of the hospital. He suddenly disappeared with the document before I had had a chance to say good-by.

The next day, however, when I went back for a moment, I saw him and started to thank him, but he stopped me. "Thank you very much!" he repeated. "Don't thank me: you're not cured! I didn't sleep all last night, wondering whether you were warm enough!"

Getting out of the hospital was very curious—probably something like getting out of jail. I had been in bed most of the time for six weeks and had been living on a vegetarian diet and toward the end, when the fever had taken my appetite away, hadn't eaten much of that. The result was that all my senses had been rendered abnormally sensitive; and getting out into the world again was attended by something of the painfulness of what the psychologists call the birth trauma. After having

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smelt nothing for so long but the stale unvarying smell of the hospital, the odor of the carpets and upholstery in the lobby of the Hotel London, which I had not noticed when I had been there before, tormented me almost unendurably with a blending of pleasure and distress; and when I went into the barber shop for a shave, the perfumes of the shaving-soap and toilet water and the emanations from the various bottles caused me a series of poignant sensations of a kind which I had read about in Huysmans and other *fin de siècle* literature, but had never experienced before. Then when I went up to my room, I was obliged to steady myself again to get accustomed to a new set of odors. I pulled the long curtains aside and looked out on the deserted courtyard, which had been an out-of-doors restaurant in August. The tourists who had been there were gone, and the place had been dismantled for the winter, and the night was coming early now. There were trees that were shaking dark leaves in the darkening autumn light, and their shape and their shuddering movement both fascinated me and made me turn away. Alone in the silence of the room, I suddenly dropped into a depression of a kind which I had never known all the time that I had been in the hospital. It was loneliness: I was missing the children and the nurses who had bothered me when I was trying to work and from whom I had looked forward to escaping. I walked back and forth across the room a few times, then began declaiming aloud some old poems of my own composition. I found that some need was relieved: my loneliness disappeared. It was the assertion of my own personality against those weeks of collective living.

It had been collective living at close quarters, which collectivization by no means implies but of which the Russians have had to endure a good deal.

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Yet they could accustom themselves to it, I thought, better than the people of Western nations. It was one of the hardships they were resigned to. This, and waiting for things forever. One had perhaps to be immersed, as I had just been, in the life of one of their institutions to appreciate the deep feeling and the "imperfective" persistence underneath their immense slowness and patience, which one otherwise tended to chafe at. And also to sympathize fully with the desperate measures of their vanguard, who want them to dominate their own lives. Gorky, in his memoir of Tolstoy, written before the Revolution, in speaking of Tolstoy's "misty preaching of 'non-activity,' of 'non-resistance to evil,' the doctrine of passivism," says: "All this is the unhealthy ferment of the old Russian blood, envenomed by Mongolian fatalism and almost chemically hostile to the West with its untiring creative labor, with its active and indomitable resistance to the evils of life." What wonder if Gorky today sits at the right hand of Stalin!

At the new railroad station at Kiev—which combines the high spaces of the Pennsylvania Station with little rows of potted plants purely Russian—a man spoke to me whom I thought I did not know. I nodded and did not shake hands; but he kept smiling, and then I recognized him. I was going to travel to the Polish border in the same train in which, almost two months ago, I had traveled from Rostov to Kiev, and this was the conductor on that train. I had treated him then like a dog because I had had a fever and it had seemed to me that he was always bothering me when I wanted to relax and rest. But now he was evidently as glad to see me as if our relations had been perfectly cordial.

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It was a shock to pass from Russia to Poland. The officials in the Soviet customs were serious but amiable little men in the simplest of khaki uniforms. But on the Polish side you found formidable giants with great ulsters and pushed-in noses. A plain-clothes man hung around on the train that took you from the Russian to the Polish customs and listened in on the conversations and presided at the opening of the baggage. "Now you'll find trains that run a little faster!" he told us. Everybody on the Polish side of the border seemed extremely Soviet-conscious. They ask you what you think of Russia and are not pleased if you think it's all right. I was told that at another point on the border the Poles had put up a sign which said, "Welcome to the Western frontier," and that the Russians had then put up one on their side which said, "Communism will abolish all frontiers."

I had been traveling with a German professor who taught Philosophy of Law at Zurich. He was an elderly man, very lively and with a great deal of intellectual curiosity. He had been studying Russian three years but had just paid his first visit to Russia. He was evidently a liberal of some sort, because he told me, with more humorous grief than bitterness, of the horrible things that the Hitlerites had been doing to the German universities. He was very much more optimistic than anyone else I had met about the imminence of the fall of Hitler and the possibility of socialism in Germany. He couldn't, he said, see how the learned professions, the experts, the artists, the engineers, could help realizing that under socialism they would be just as well off and more important; and as for the profiteering classes, their profits were dwindling all the time and it would be easy to dispossess them. There was a great deal of stifled dissatisfaction with the Nazis, and nothing was possible between Hitler and socialism but some kind of pure military dictatorship, and that couldn't last very long. He had just got-

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ten hold of a volume of Lenin which someone had left in the Zurich library, and "I must say," he said in English, "it's very clever!" He had never read Lenin before.—I learned after I got to Paris that he was a distinguished man in his field and had been turned out of his chair at Frankfort by the Nazis.

When we got on the train for Warsaw, it was pleasant to find oneself again in well-upholstered compartments where everything worked and was clean. But as soon as we came out of the customs, we were assailed by undiscouragable boys who wanted to sell us sandwiches and tea and by porters who persisted in performing services which we did not want performed and who complained that we did not tip them enough. "I don't like this obsequiousness!" the professor said plaintively, as he fished down in his pocket for change. Then we both began to laugh: Back in the old capitalist system! Nobody in Russia ever tries to sell you anything. When you need something, you go into a store and a nice little slow-moving girl interrupts her reading to get it for you. Shopkeeper psychology is something that they seem really to have liquidated completely.

The conductor was a comic-opera official with a green uniform and lots of silver braid, something like the police in Monaco. And just as we had gotten settled in the compartment, a bloated Polish military officer with a blond mustache, a florid face, and a chest plastered with medals, strode in, disregarding the other occupants, slammed down an upper berth—it was a second-class compartment, not a *wagon-lit*—slammed up the lid of the under seat, grabbed all the pillows out of it, without inquiring whether anybody else would have any, piled them onto the berth and stretched himself out to sleep. And in another moment the compartment was filled with two enormous Polish bullfrogs who resembled in the most startling manner the capitalists in radical cartoons. One of them had pig-like eyes, a head completely bald, fat rolls of flesh at the back of his neck and

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ears that came to points like bat's wings—the only time I have ever seen this last phenomenon outside of satirical drawings. He proceeded at once to bang open the window, though it was the first of October and cold. I reflected that no such behavior as this was ever to be seen in Russia, where the people traveling in trains did not feel they had to fight each other for advantages; and, although I had been glad to leave, I felt an unexpected wave of homesickness for everything in the Soviet Union that was natural, decent and humane when the people in the Western countries were still so much at each other's throats that they could hardly even pretend to be civil.

I suggested the next morning to the professor while we were having an excellent breakfast in Warsaw—that the people we had seen on the train were really actors from the Moscow Art Theatre who had been assigned to put on these acts in order to impress upon tourists the contrast between the Soviet Union and the outside capitalist world. "Yes," he replied—he had slept without any pillows—"I think it must be so. They are like the imitation villages that Potemkin had put up for Catherine the Great!"

And whenever we would encounter an importunate guide or a peddler who tried to waylay us with postcards, he would murmur: "Another Russian agent!"

The train stopped twelve minutes in Berlin, and I got out to buy the papers. I had hoped to find out what was happening, but the papers did not go in for news. One of them turned out to be a Jew-baiting sheet, rejoicing in the recent Nazi law to prevent the intermarriage of Jews with Aryans. In a box on the front page was the following warning: "People will say to you, 'Aren't the Jews Germans? They were born here, they speak our language, they have been German citizens, etc.' If

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anybody tells you this, just reply to them as follows: 'In the United States, there are men of German race who have been born there, who speak English and who are citizens. Yet have they turned into Red Indians or Negroes?' If anybody tells you this, that is all you need to answer!'—For the rest, there were cartoons of fiendish Communists brandishing long knives drenched with blood.

When one traveled in the early years of the century, the European countries which one visited loomed as immense entities, with impregnable national virtues, luminous and civilizing cultures, solemn traditions, majestic histories. At the time of the War, they seemed like Titans colliding. Today, when one has been in the United States and then in Soviet Russia, they seem a pack of little quarrelsome states, maintaining artificial barriers and suffering from morbid distempers. How the map has changed since our youth!

Rigor mortis has set in in Paris.

VII. Final Reflections

THE strongest impression one gets in Russia, as soon as one begins to see beneath the contradictory phenomena of the surface, is one of extraordinary heroism.

And the effect of this is very sobering. Only idiots gush about Russia. Only idiots pretend that life there is easy. Whether one encounters a Communist official working his head off to make socialism succeed in the face of inertia at home and hostile pres-

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sure abroad; or a professional man or woman of the old bourgeoisie or nobility, who has lost property, position and family, who lives always more or less under suspicion and who is likely already to have done time in a construction camp or a prison, yet who still remains loyal to the Revolution; or a member of the Komsomol intoxicating himself with work and study; or a peasant woman applying herself with desperate seriousness to the duties of ticket-taker or railroad conductor; or an old doctor or an old farmer deprived of everything he had spent his life attaining, yet still sticking with all decency to *his* job, in the interests of a future he will never see, of benefits he will never share; or a cultivated and charming young woman grown up amid the anarchy of the Civil Wars and the Spartan years of the first phase of the Revolution with no dancing and no pretty clothes and breaking down her physique and her nerves under the exactions of the Soviet programs—whomever one sees, wherever one turns, one is made to feel the terrible seriousness of what is being done in Russia and the terrible cost which it requires.

And, on the other hand, it is as foolish for a foreigner to make an issue of the bad aspects of the dictatorship: the lack of democratic procedure, the suppression of political opposition, the constraint of the official terror. The Russians can always reply that, with all the machinery of our democratic institutions, we are unable to feed and clothe our people, and that these supposed democratic institutions are merely illusions to divert our attention from observing that the government and the laws in reality work only one way: to protect the profits of the owning classes. This last is, I believe, not quite true: I feel convinced, since I have been in Russia, that American republican institutions, disastrously as they are always being abused, have some permanent and absolute value. I don't believe that they will necessarily be destroyed in the course of the transformation of society,

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any more than our advanced "technique," but think it probable that they will, on the contrary, like it, make the transition to socialism easier. But we shall be in no position to reprove the Russians till we shall be able to show them an American socialism which is free from the Russian defects.

And in the meantime, in spite of these defects, you feel in the Soviet Union that you are at the moral top of the world where the light never really goes out, just as you know in the Gulf of Finland, where the summer day never ends, that you are close to the geographical top. The central fact, from which one never can escape, which one is always stumbling upon under all the fluid surface of the casualness, the frivolity, the timidity, the evasiveness, the inexactitude, the apathy, of some aspects of Russian life, is the relationship of the Russian people to the tomb under the Kremlin wall. Day after day, rain or shine, the people line up and wait for hours in slowly advancing queues that loop back and forth across Red Square, in order to go into the tomb, to step down past the walls of Ural marble, black and gray and sown with flakes of lapis lazuli like blue silken butterflies' wings, and to stare for a moment at that face, where the soldier with his bayonet stands staring. It is not the face you expect if you have looked at pictures and statues, and it is different even from the death-mask. But, in shrinking, the flesh has brought out qualities, fundamental as the fine grain of wood, which are also strikingly apparent in this latter. We are used to seeing Lenin represented, as he must usually have been during his waking life, determined, intent, energetic, arguing, explaining, imposing himself; and in the death-mask we are still made aware of the aggressive intellect of the box-like skull which seems always to be tilted forward: the nose and lips are still rather thick, the eyebrows sharply bristling. The casts of the hands show finely tapering but effective square-tipped fingers. But the head in the tomb, with its high forehead, its straight

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nose, its pointed beard (which has grown gray on the dead man's cheeks), its sensitive nostrils and eyelids, gives an impression in some ways strangely similar to that one gets from the supposed death-mask of Shakespeare. It is a beautiful face, of exquisite fineness; and—what surely proves sufficiently its authenticity—it is profoundly aristocratic. Yet it is an aristocrat who is not specialized as an aristocrat, a poet who is not specialized as a poet, a scientist who is not specialized as a scientist. Nor is it in the least the face of a saint. Except for the slightly slanting eyes, it seems today hardly even the face of a Russian. For here humanity has produced, independent of all the old disciplines, the scientist whose study is humanity, the poet whose material is not images but the water and salt of human beings—the superior man who has burst out of the classes and claimed all that man has done which is superior for the refinement of mankind as a whole. And here we come to gaze down at this shell of flesh, in its last thinness, its delicacy and fragility, before it crumbles and loses the mold—this bone and skin still keeping the stamp of that intellect, that passion, that will, whose emergence has stunned the world almost with more embarrassment at being made to extend its conception of what man, as man alone, can accomplish, than admiration at the achievements of genius. And these countrymen of his are amazed, with their formless and expressionless faces, when they look down on him and know that he was one of them, and that he invoked from their loose and sluggish plasm all those triumphs to which life must rise and to which he thought himself the casual guidepost.

EPILOGUE

THE TRAVELER. The factories, the committee rooms, the parades; the amusement parks, the meeting halls, the bars—they are as empty as I myself when I go into them. Seen so, the life of men can give me nothing: they have no other life than I. He who said, "In His will is our peace,"—it was with his own will that he was reconciled; he who said, "Lord, forgive them!"—it was he himself who had forgiven. And so he who first saw and said that man advanced on his belly—he himself had risen upright; and he who spoke in the name of the masses—it was he who gave them their soul. The states slip; the people cringe; all look after vanished suns. Yet still we refer to obsolete authorities decisions which must be made by ourselves, yet still we invoke from invisible forces the power we ourselves do not find. Still we think in terms of mythologies in this day when, if God cannot help us, the People or the Masses can do no better—when accuracy of insight, when courage of judgment, are worth all the names in all the books.